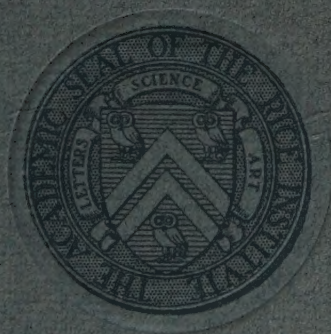


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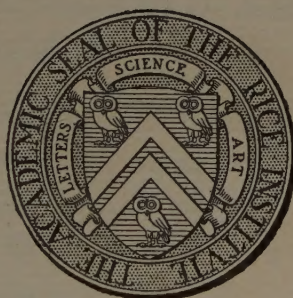
A university of liberal and technical learning
founded by William Marsh Rice in the City of
Houston, Texas, and dedicated by him to
the advancement of Letters, Science, and Art

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FOREWORD

THE following five public lectures were delivered during the winter of 1914-15 at The Rice Institute. The writer's immediate purpose was to stimulate further interest in the reading of Russian literature; his further aim, to share with his audience, in a very informal manner, some of the ethical ideas dominating Russian fiction. This small collection aspires neither to bibliographic nor to biographic completeness; it does not begin at the beginning, nor is it finished; it does not deal with the Great War, nor with Russia's recent wonderful transfiguration and more wonderful prospect. What has been attempted here is not a critical analysis either of Russia's novel or of Russian life, but rather a broad survey of the Russian novel as itself a criticism of life. To that end the writer has limited himself to Russia's four greatest masters, and has used their own words wherever possible, hoping in this way to deepen the reader's interest in their works as well as in the problems which they raise.

Among the English translations which have been utilized by the writer, and which he desires to recommend to those interested in further reading, are the following, easily accessible: Constance Garnett's versions of Turgenev, Dostoyevsky, and Tolstoy; Isabel F. Hapgood's translations of Turgenev and Tolstoy; Louise and Aylmer Maude's and N. H. Dole's translations of Tolstoy. Several of the novels have been published in Everyman's Library, and Gogol's "Dead Souls" by the F. A. Stokes Company. The reader will also find Aylmer Maude's "Life of Tolstoy" and Count Ilya Tolstoy's "Reminiscences of Tolstoy" of great interest and value, and, for a general discussion of the whole subject, Prince Kropotkin's "Russian Literature."

THE PROBLEM OF LIFE IN THE RUSSIAN NOVEL

LECTURE I

THE RUSSIAN SOIL AND NIKOLAI GOGOL

RUSSIA'S greatest glory is her literature. One may wonder how a people so ignorant as the Russian people are proverbially supposed to be could produce such a literature. Yet the mass of Englishmen are certainly better educated to-day than they were during the age which produced Shakespeare; nor was Shakespeare himself an erudite scholar. Russian literature is great, not because Russia is learned, but because her literature is the tragic utterance of one hundred million people aching to be born into real humanity.

To the Russian, literature is a serious business. The Czar's bureaucracy blocked all the avenues which the social consciousness of man usually follows in actualizing its ideals. Economic and religious reform, political and educational reorganization, public assembly, free speech,—all these have been closed to the Russian. A society in which the individual is denied these obvious ways of self-expression will be a society in which the mass will be mute, stolid, bovine,—even as the Russian *mujik*.

But what of the tortured spirit, the genius, the prophet,—what of him who must unburden his soul or perish? In Russia until yesterday he could not make a speech in parliament, because there was no parliament; he could not address a mass-meeting, since mass-meetings were not allowed; it

were useless to write a newspaper article or a fiery pamphlet, as these would never leave the printer. In any of these cases the futile attempt itself might send him to prison or to Siberia. One avenue alone has been open. The Russian soul has uttered itself in song and story. And thus in an odd sense it may be said that the bureaucracy, which has ground under its heel the Russian millions and has kept them brutalized, has, in leaving only the literary road open, virtually compelled Russian genius to follow that road, and has thus made Russian literature great. This peculiar nature of Russian literature explains in a measure its distinguishing features: its profound seriousness, its penetration and realism, and above all, its social character. The drama and the novel are not the recreations of Russia's esthetic leisure hours, nor poetry an idle pastime: in them we can see Russia's spirit groping toward the light of freedom and culture. The Russian writer, great or near-great, feels himself the spokesman of one hundred millions, and this social sense, dominating his work, lends it gravity, earnestness, and dignity, makes mere wit, clever pretense, and shallow optimism inadmissible, and compels sincerity. This social sense may lead to crude realism, but to sham and frivolity, never. The literature of no other modern nation can be characterized so truly as a criticism of life. And life is vast and various in the Russian land, a land of contrasts, of bright lights and black shadows, of beauty and of squalor, of glory as great as her shame, a land in which can be heard, not only the middle octave of mediocrity, but also the highest notes of human attainment and the lowest depths of human despair.

Hence the significance of Russian literature to the student of Russia, for the history of Russian letters is the history of the Russian people. The characters which move through the pages of Russian novels are living sons and daughters of

million-voiced Russia. The message of Russia's literary masterpieces is a message of gloom, of Slavic disenchantment and of what the Pole Sienkiewicz called Slavic unproductivity,—the message of the pitifully inadequate Russia that *is*. But the compelling truth and the matchless artistry of that message give us a vision of the glorious Russia yet unborn. And the absence of frivolity, the sincere, genuine realism of Russian literature, while making it truly national, at the same time save it from provinciality. The heroes of Turgenev and Tolstoy are true Russians, of course, but their struggles are human struggles and their appeal is indeed universal. Unless one digs deep enough, one cannot reach genuine Russian nature; and when one has dug deep enough to reach genuine Russian nature, behold! he is face to face with human nature.

In speaking thus of Russian literature, it is not of course intended that all Russian writers are sincere, serious realists. Russia is plentifully supplied with all sorts and conditions of writers and typewriters. Besides, Russia takes up the literary fads of France and Germany as readily as America apes Parisian millinery. But when we think of genuine Russian literature, we think of the real masters, of those whom Russians themselves regard as their prophets, and who alone have a claim to our attention,—those few men whose life work is a consistent attempt to portray truly Russia's men and women, to analyze the ethical problems of Russian life, to face honestly the question of Russia's national destiny. To four of these masters—the four greatest—I would invite your attention: Gogol, Turgenev, Dostoyevsky, Tolstoy.

Nikolai Gogol made realism a tradition in Russian literature. He enjoys the double distinction of being not only the first great analyst of the Russian soul, but also Russia's greatest humorist. It is something to have written the first

master-comedy in a language, which, after a century, is still the master-comedy, and also with a humorous novel to have inaugurated a movement in literature which must of necessity lead to heroic pessimism so long as Russia is what she is. Gogol did both, and the greatness of the man is but poorly appreciated outside his native land.

Nature endowed him well for his great work. He came from what is known as Ukraina, or Little Russia. It is now a province in Southern Russia, but once it was a free land of blossoms and battles, when the ancestors of the saddle-born Cossacks, who to-day form the stormy heart of the Czar's army, were roving knights of adventure, unvanquished spirits roaming the vast stretches of the Russian steppes. Gogol was born in the very heart of it. A son of the soil, himself of Cossack descent, lulled to sleep from infancy with the luring tales of the long-vanished days, he longed for his native steppe from the clerk's desk which he occupied in St. Petersburg. In poetic homesickness he wrote and at the age of twenty startled Russia with his beautiful sketches of Little Russian and Cossack life. Is one to believe that geniuses come in showers? The year of his birth, 1809, gave to the world Tennyson, Poe, Darwin, and Abraham Lincoln. To Russia it surely gave a master, free not only from the mock classicism which Pushkin and Lermontov had cast away, but free also from the morbid, self-engrossed manner which Byron had made a fad in Europe and, for a time at least, a literary fashion in Russia.

Gogol had been collecting materials for a nine-volume history of the Middle Ages; he actually wrote and published a prose epic of the Dnieper Cossacks, a comedy of Russia's corrupt officialdom, and a novel in which Russian life is revealed as the spirit of the Middle Ages is revealed in Dante and knight-errantry in "Don Quixote."

Gogol's humor is Homeric; there is indubitable Homeric influence in his work, and there is no Russian book which possesses such a Homeric sweep of elemental nature as "Taras Bulba," his story of the Dnieper Cossacks. A prose epic is "Taras Bulba," an epic of Cossack heroes, brave rather than beautiful, more hardy than cultured, intensely patriotic and martially Christian, but neither broad-visioned nor wise; an epic of braggarts who make good their boasts, of half-brutal, half-divine horsemen of the Russian plains, resistless, irrepressible, outwitting Tartar and Pole in battle, yet veritable children in the primitive naïveté of their minds. In old Taras Bulba Gogol has pictured a masterly Cossack, a truly gigantic figure, one half Ulysses, one half Sir Toby.

These restless riders of the endless steppes were a constant check to Mongol invasion. They saved Western Europe from the Tartar, and helped to save Northern Europe from the Turk. This was no regular standing army of soldiers who knew only how to fight, and knew naught else. "There was no craft the Cossack did not know; he could make wine, build a cart, grind powder, do a farrier's or a gunsmith's work, and, last but not least, riot and drink and feast as only a Russian can; it all came natural to him."

But these were, after all, avocations, and the least danger of invasion was enough to let the Cossack show his real business in life. "A captain had but to enter the squares and market-places of a Cossack settlement or village, stand up on a cart, and cry out: 'Hark ye, ye beer-swillers and brewers! Enough of this ale-brewing, yea, and wallowing on stoves, yea, feeding the flies with your greasy bodies! Come to, and win knightly fame and honor! And ye plowmen and mowers, sheep-tenders and women-lovers! Enough of following the plow, yea, shoving your greasy boots in the earth, yea, dangling after women and wasting knightly

strength! . . .’ And these words were ever as sparks falling on dry wood. The plowman broke his plow, the brewers and beer-venders left their vats and smashed their barrels, the craftsman and trader sent their craft and shop to the devil, broke all the pots in the house, and sprang into the saddle. . . . When the campaign was over the warrior returned to his meadows and pastures by the Dnieper river fords,—went a-fishing, bought and sold, brewed beer, and was, in short, an independent Cossack.”

The story opens with the arrival of Bulba’s two sons from the Academy of Kiev, where their father has compelled them to stay and finish their classical education, in order that, having acquired learning, they can afford to despise it as Cossacks should. Instead of welcoming his sons with a kindly word, Bulba compels the elder to quarrel with him, and after a warm fist fight has assured him that his first-born is no milksop he embraces and kisses him. “Let no man mock at you, son! Drub everybody as you have drubbed me!” And he orders the feast of welcome. “Put everything upon the table! We want no cakes, nor gingers, nor poppy-pasties nor other fangles! Drag us a whole sheep or a goat, yea, hundred-year-old honey, yea, plenty of brandy, not faked with raisins and rubbish, but clear, sparkling brandy that can pinch and sparkle like mad!”

The meal is barely half over when old Bulba announces that the very next morning he will take his sons to Sietch-beyond-the-Rapids, the great stamping-ground and corral of the Dnieper Cossacks. He is eager to exhibit his sons, and the thought of once more meeting his old fighting comrades maddens him with joy. A sudden contempt for his established home takes hold of him; the nomad in his soul is in the saddle. “We will away in the morning. Why tarry here? What enemy is there to fight hereabouts? What

do we want with this hut? What do we want with it all? What are all these pots for?" And he begins to knock down the mugs and flasks and fling them about the room.

During all this scene, one person is a mute spectator—Bulba's wife. Gogol has painted her in all the crude tragedy of her life, sitting on the bench and sadly gazing at the children with whom she is doomed soon to part. We can see her mutely tending her warrior-husband as he orders his sons to be ready to start the first thing in the morning; we watch with her all through the night, as she bends over her boys' heads sleeping under the clear southern sky, combing their tangled locks and moistening them with her tears.

A man's epic is "Taras Bulba," for the Cossack's life was a man's life. "Her lot was a hard one, as was every woman's in those distant times. She had been loved but for an instant, in the first heat of youth and passion; then her stern charmer had cast her aside for his sword, his comrades, and his carousals. She would see him for three days in two years, and then probably not hear of him for years again. Aye, and when she did, and they lived together, what a life was hers! She suffered insults and even blows while she dreamed of caresses bestowed in the fullness of love. Hers was a strange existence among the crowd of wifeless knights on whom dissolute Sietch had thrown its stern mantle. Her joyless youth faded before her; her fair fresh cheeks and bosom lost their bloom for lack of tenderness, and became covered with premature wrinkles. All love, all sentiment, all that is tender and passionate in woman was turned into maternal instinct. She hovered over her children like some solitary lapwing of the steppes, full of pain and passion and tears."

The picture of this unloved old mother flinging herself on the younger of her sons early the next morning, grasping

his stirrup, clinging to his saddle, fighting madly with two burly Cossacks until she is twice torn away from her offspring and the horses gallop away, is, alike in its simplicity and its intensity, a very gem of elemental passion. The retrospect of it makes the scene doubly poignant, for the Cossack mother never again sees her boys.

But they are a-horse and away across the boundless steppes. I wish I might quote all of the remarkable description which Gogol gives of this vast Cossack-breeding soil. A brief passage must suffice: "The sun had long since come out in the once dull sky, and was bathing the steppe in its cheerful light. The farther the steppe reached, the more beautiful it became. . . . Nature has nothing fairer than these steppes with their surface like a green-gold ocean strewn with a million flowers. Posies, lilac, blue, and green, shimmered in the tall, slim grass; yellow gorse and white clover danced upon the surface. An ear of corn, brought God knows whence, had taken root, and partridges pecked here and there among its thick stalks. The songs of a thousand birds filled the air, and hawks, suspended therein with outstretched wings, gazed on the earth below them. A flock of wild geese, wheeling cloudwards, sent their piercing cry from some distant lake. A lapwing rose with measured stroke from the grass and bathed delightfully in the air's blue waves, now lost in the heights until one black spot alone was visible, now turning on the wing and soaring sunwards. . . . The devil take you, steppes, how beautiful you are!"

Brilliantly full of life the steppe is in the daytime; alluring in twilit even; at midnight it is mystic, infinite. "Ever and anon the night sky was lighted by the distant glare of dry rushes burning on the meads and river banks, and dark flights of swans, hastening northward, shimmered with a

pinkish hue till it seemed as though red kerchiefs were flapping against the sky."

At last they arrive at their destination, the stamping-ground Sietch. Bulba looks himself over, twists his long moustachios, and assumes an air of martial dignity. A martial place is Sietch-beyond-the-Rapids: it has everything that the soldier wants, and nothing else; wealth or poverty, parentage—respectable or otherwise—count for naught here. The initiation ceremony is simple: "Good day! Do you believe in Christ?" the commander would ask of a newcomer. "Do you believe in the Holy Trinity? Do you go to church? You do? Well, then, cross yourself. Very good! Now join whatever regiment you like."

It takes small provocation to rouse this many-hued assembly of daredevils into a campaign. They start for Poland to avenge the insults heaped upon the Orthodox Christ by Catholic unbelievers and unchristian Jews. And if individually they are free-lances, collectively they are a well-organized army. They lead stern lives, and stern is their morality while the campaign lasts. Their picturesque spirits demand vivid manifestation of the austerity of law. A thief is tied ignobly to a post; a club is placed beside him, with which every passer-by must hit him as long as he remains alive. For a murderer a deep hole is dug and he is put in it alive, a coffin with his victim's corpse is lowered over the offender, and living and dead are then covered together.

It is a bloody story that follows, a Homeric recital of battle and iron courage and fierce revenge. Of Bulba's two sons, the younger falls victim to the charms of a Polish daughter and proves traitor to the Cossack cause. Old Taras kills him with his own hands. And when the battle goes against the Cossacks and his brave elder son is cap-

tured, taken away to far-distant Poland, imprisoned, and tortured to death; when his long-tested fortitude at last gives way and the young soul cries out in agony: "Father, where art thou? Do you not hear all this?" a cry rings through the Polish crowd: "Aye, I hear it!" For it is Bulba himself, daring the whole might of Poland in order to see his son once more before avenging his death.

And most terribly does he avenge it. True enough, he is burned at the stake in the end. But what boots it? Cossackdom lives and grows in might after him. Gogol writes: "The land of the Russ has an army founded upon religion, than which no foundation is more powerful. Hard and stern it is as the rock in the midst of a strong ocean. It rears its unbreakable walls from the sea's deep bed and gazes long and sternly at the waves which break over it. Woe betide the ship that strikes it, for her rigging shall float in broken pieces and her sides be ground to powder, whilst her drowning crew's despairing cry fills the air. . . . Think ye there is aught in the world can frighten a Cossack? What force or flame can overcome Russia's strength?"

Taras Bulba is a barbaric story. There is no point in trying to disguise what indeed Gogol himself freely brings out: the blood-thirstiness, the coarse, crude spirituality, the wifeless, roughshod manner, the bigotry and superstition, the brutal religiosity and racial savagery of these Cossack knights. Taras is a hero in the sense in which a magnificent bulldog or a bellicose ram is a hero when fighting with beasts of low degree. Estimate him as generously as you will, he remains a diamond in the rough—very rough—and, judged by any standard save the martial, doubt might arise as to whether he is a diamond at all. Gogol has portrayed a semi-savage life in which the very austerities of existence produce virtues as fierce as vices. Taras Bulba and his comrades

are demigods in battle, but we seek in vain for any expression of Christlike sweetness and charity in Cossack Sietch. These fierce riders of the steppes style themselves defenders of the Christian faith, but their true ideal of sublimity approximates Attila the Scourge of God more nearly than it does Jesus the Saviour of Man.

Gogol had painted with giant strokes, with a titanic brush, and the Homeric canvas caught the imagination of Russia. But the artist in Gogol could not have overlooked a fatal circumstance. A Taras Bulba could be the hero of a barbaric, martial Russia; where was the heroism of modern, westernized, peaceful Russia to be sought? On religious zeal and savage valor a martial autocracy had surely rested supreme in Russia, and still does rest. But what were to be Russia's bulwarks in her climb upward to genuine modern culture? Gogol was fast turning a realist. "Taras Bulba" had been an occasionally realistic treatment of an essentially romantic theme. But life in the Russian capital, close contact with the somber Russian actualities led Gogol to realistic themes. From the epic songs of the past he turned to the analysis of a prosaic present, which in Russia had retained the ancient brutality after it had lost the ancient glamour, and was pettily, unheroically grasping and cruel. Gradually we see tears mixing with the laughter of Gogol, bitterness and pathos behind the humor, until in the comedy "Revizor" an unspeakably farcical situation serves only to point out a state of social and political corruption, the tragic realization of which sobered laughing Russia and made her shudder guiltily.

The theme of "Revizor," or, as it is usually translated into English, "The Inspector-General," is perfectly simple. The situation is announced in the first twenty words of the play. News has reached the governor of a provincial town

that an inspector-general, sent secretly from St. Petersburg to investigate local administration and report to the central government, is about to arrive incognito in their midst. A friend of the governor has apprised him of the fact and warned him to put his administrative house hurriedly in order. And he needs the warning, as the governor himself informs his various colleagues.

The scene is decidedly different from the barbaric steppes of "Taras Bulba." We are introduced to "a Russian inland town, from which you may gallop for three years before you reach a foreign country." A pack of clumsy officials mismanage it most pitifully; every corner and crevice of it shrinks from the slightest inspection. The hospital is organized on the simple basis that if a man dies, he dies, and if he gets well—why, then, he gets well. The patients smoke strong tobacco, their nightcaps remind one of the mob in "Julius Cæsar," and they are as dirty as blacksmiths. The justice of the peace is a sportsman with a fondness for greyhound puppies, and his assistant reeks of spirits as if he has just come out of a distillery. The court attendants breed geese in the antechamber. The governor tells the postmaster kindly to open every letter and see that no complaint about the administration is sent out by some of the misgoverned citizens. The warning is superfluous; the postmaster informs him that as a matter of course he opens every letter that passes through the post-office!

Behold the setting! Only one thing is needed: an inspector. Two of the local male gossips rush into the room and announce that they have seen the inspector in the hotel. As a matter of fact, the supposed inspector is a penniless young spendthrift on his way home, who has lost all his money gambling and is on the verge of starvation, the landlord allowing him no further credit. The comical situations

which follow the mistaking of this penniless scapegrace for an inspector-general may well be imagined. The governor asks the young man to his house: in an excruciatingly ludicrous scene the young gambler thinks he is about to be arrested for evading his board bill, while the governor interprets his ill humor as a mark of official displeasure. One after another, the local officials take their turn at paying their respects, and from each the "inspector-general" borrows a few hundred rubles, the amount of the bribe varying with the trepidation of the guilty official. He makes silly love to the governor's wife, and in order to extricate himself from an embarrassing situation asks the governor for the hand of his daughter. Everything is working up to a climax, when finally the young rascal's servant, a lout possessing more real intelligence than the entire bureaucratic staff, persuades his master to tempt fate no longer and escape as quickly as he can. Just before leaving, however, he narrates all his experiences in a letter to a friend in St. Petersburg. In due course the postmaster opens this letter, and while it is being read to the consternated officials a policeman enters and announces that the real inspector-general, sent by imperial command, has arrived at the hotel and requests the governor's immediate attendance. Curtain.

"The Inspector-General" is, of course, Russia's greatest comedy; it would occupy a high place in any literature, so fully does it meet the requirements of dramatic art. Shamed Russia laughed, or else felt affronted and declared that there was not a single honest character in the play. Which is perfectly true, Gogol retorted, but there is honest ridicule throughout. Gogol did not intend that his audience should merely laugh. In later years he wrote: "In 'Revizor' I tried to collect in one heap all that was bad in Russia, as I then understood it; I wished to turn it into ridicule. The real

impression produced was that of fear. Through the laughter the spectator feels my bitterness and sorrow." Russia could not laugh gaily at this tragi-comic exhibition of her spiritual nakedness. At the end of the play the governor, chagrined at his ridiculous position, suddenly turns on the laughing audience and shouts words that Gogol was flinging at all Russia: "What are you laughing at? You are laughing at yourselves!"

All the corrupt officialdom of Russia conspired to keep the play off the boards. But it had caught Czar Nikolai's fancy. He laughed imperially at its performance. Imperial sanction had been accorded that penetrating analysis of Russian life, which later was to turn Czar and government against literary realism—in vain. For while the comic exhibition of provincial corruption could count on the approval of imperial St. Petersburg, the new note which Gogol struck in "Revizor" was to be repeated in other less comic, more relentless revelations of Russian life, which made Russia cease laughing, which brought it to a sudden realization of its unspeakable misery, which potentially and actually incited to revolt, for they called forth the dangerous question which is already the title of two Russian books: "What Is To Be Done?"

In "Revizor" Gogol established realism as a tradition of the Russian drama. He performed a similar service for Russia's novel by writing the first capital work of Russian fiction, "Dead Souls," the first part of which, written in 1838, was published in 1846.

"Dead Souls" is the Russian "Divine Comedy." Dante's travel-notes through the world beyond were, as a matter of fact, a mirror of medieval life—a mirror with a thousand faces. "Dead Souls," similarly, is a succession of prose cantos in which the thousand and one sides of Russian life

in town and country are subjected to the most searching scrutiny. Again we may compare it with "Don Quixote." Cervantes' masterpiece showed the pompous folly of cavalier Spain, and made knight-errant heroics ridiculous. Gogol's novel turned the pitiless light of unqualified realism on Russia, revealed Russia so veraciously that after "Dead Souls" had been published Russian novelists could continue to write only in the spirit of "Dead Souls."

A complete outline of the plot of Gogol's masterpiece is impossible to give here, just as it is impossible to summarize in a few words the entire substance of the "Divine Comedy"; and yet a paragraph is sufficient to state what "Dead Souls" is about. In Gogol's day the Russian peasantry were still serfs of the rich landowners. They could be bought and sold like any other property. The government collected taxes, not from them, but on them. If a "soul" (serf) died, the landowner had to pay taxes on him for several years, just as if he were alive, until the taking of the next census should alter the statistics.

Now this is the animus of the novel. A nobleman, Pavel Ivanovitch Tchitchikov, who is in bad financial straits, concocts a bold scheme for restoring his credit. The plan is as simple as it is audacious. He would go from landowner to landowner and either obtain free of charge or buy at a nominal price the deed to those of their serfs who had died since the last census, thus ridding them of so many taxable burdens. When he had acquired in this way the legal ownership of a large number of "souls" whose non-existence was not likely to be discovered until the next census, he would "transport" them to a tract of land somewhere on the southern plains, where the Russian government was offering homesteads to colonizers. He would thus have the legal ownership of a supposedly large estate. Using these actu-

ally dead, but legally alive, souls as security, he planned to borrow a large sum of money from the Council of Guardians' Bank, and thus restore his shattered credit. The plan of the story is thus seen at a glance, and Gogol's idea in his long account of Tchitchikov's journeys was obvious: in chronicling the travels and adventures of this trafficker in dead souls, Gogol undertook the creation of a gallery of Russian portraits. As he himself expressed it, "I wished to show, at least from one point of view, all Russia."

And what a portrayal it is! As Tchitchikov's inebriate coachman Selifan drives his rickety *britchka* from estate to estate, all the thousand-charactered immensity of Russia reveals itself before us in a living panorama. The hero himself, too greedy of immediate opulence to follow the tedious path of slow-coming prosperity and too unstable in his moral sense to relish the path of virtue, is a very chameleon of obsequious adaptability and opportunism, alternating with a certain haughty touch-me-not dignity. A nobleman of obscure origin, he has shaped his entire life in accordance with his father's precept: "Friends and comrades will cheat you, but money will never betray you, no matter in what straits you may be."

Having inherited from that profound ancestor, in addition to the aforesaid wisdom, four badly worn waistcoats, two ancient surtouts lined with lambskin, and an insignificant sum of money, Tchitchikov enters the department of justice, determined to win in the race of official preferment over his colleagues, the faces of some of whom are described by Gogol as "looking exactly like badly baked bread." By intrigue, subterfuge, contemptible stooping and hypocrisy, Tchitchikov twice gets within sight of venal affluence, once by the road of a public building commission, another time by custom-house bribery. On both occasions,

however, he is caught in his own meshes and, while he avoids imprisonment, he is plucked of all his ill-gotten finery and is compelled to begin anew. He begins always in a different manner, it is true, but it is ever the same motive which incites him. From the losses of his inglorious past Tchitchikov learns caution and cunning, but cupidity he seems unable to unlearn. Yet there is something attractive and, one is ashamed to add, something almost lovable about the man, something making one wish that, even by trickery if necessary, he could somehow succeed in amassing the wealth which he demands as a prerequisite for settling down and realizing his lifelong dream of becoming a respected paterfamilias and a virtuous, useful citizen in the last chapter.

Gogol's genius has achieved a masterpiece of character delineation in the portrayal of Tchitchikov. It is not a stock-villain or picaresque intriguer that we have before us. Moving in a social medium which in turn amuses, repels, and disgusts the spectator, Tchitchikov is at least respectable and externally refined: the author himself is obviously impressed by the cleanliness of his hero's linen and his liberal use of perfumed soap and eau de Cologne. Occasionally his eyes seem to catch a gleam of the pure light of moral decency and one almost dares to hope that the man in his soul will master the vulture; but a new prey comes in sight and the old hunt continues. As in the case of the besotted miser Pliushkin, there flashes "a ray of light which expresses, not feeling, but the pale reflection of a feeling: an apparition similar to the sudden appearance of a drowning man, which appearance elicits a joyous shout from the crowd assembled on the shore. But he is not seen again, and the calm surface of the unresponsive fluid seems still more terrible and more desolate than before."

We find Tchitchikov in prison, almost on bended knees in

his repentant decision to accept the proffered help of the millionaire benefactor Murasov and turn a new leaf; but the kind gentleman has barely left the room when the rascally offer of a shyster to get him out of jail by foul means rouses the prisoner's hopes to the pitch of enthusiasm, and all his tears of repentance are wiped dry.

The society in which Tchitchikov plies his traffic in dead souls does not retain our moral approbation which he forfeits: more frequently the contrast is one between vice and vice than between vice and virtue. In many respects he is morally the equal of his victims and judges, and in point of personal qualities he is undoubtedly their superior. Gogol's portraiture of this society is at once humorous and tragic: irresistibly mirth-provoking as his manner is on the surface, there lurks beneath the laughter an ocean of infinite sorrow for the nation whose nakedness of soul he ridicules. The tragedy wells up through the humor, it is ever more in evidence, and the novel ends in increasing spiritual gloom. For sheer comedy, of course, one doubts if Russian genius has ever produced the peer of "Dead Souls," especially the early part of the novel. In the portraits of Russia's landowners with whom Tchitchikov deals, the ridiculous and the contemptible in human nature are chastised in a manner which manifests the infinite variety of Gogol's art.

The brainless sentimentalist Manilov, of agreeable features, but "rather too much permeated with sugar," dreams his life away in maudlin projects of the most utopian philanthropy, but he never gets beyond the fourteenth page of the book he is about to finish, and in his house there is forever something lacking. His heart would doubtless be in the right place, were it only in the vicinity of some backbone and not altogether removed from intelligence. As it is, he plans to make his estate a paradise of comfort for his serfs; yet when

Tchitchikov offers to buy his dead souls, neither he nor his overseer knows who is alive and who is dead on the estate. Tchitchikov's affable manner so melts his soft heart that he makes him a present of the dead peasants, and bidding his guest farewell, seats himself in a chair and dreams all afternoon of how delightful it would be to dwell with his friend on the bank of some river.

The hero's progress is not invariably as easy, however. The next landowner, the widow Korobotchkina, is a grasping bargainer, in mortal fear of being cheated. She has never sold dead souls before, she argues; she wants to wait awhile; "perhaps some merchants may come, and I can find out about the prices; . . . perhaps the dead souls may be needed some day on the estate!" Sophisticated, polished greed wrestles with greed in the rough throughout a magnificent chapter, and it is hard to make a moral choice between the two. Then there is Sobakevitch, too much concerned with his own interests to be at all inquisitive about the motives of the buyer of dead souls. He asks one hundred rubles apiece for the dead souls which Tchitchikov had offered to buy at the rate of eighty kopeks a name, and proceeds to read our hero a sublime catalogue of laudation in which the virtues of each dead serf are set forth: "Some other scoundrel will deceive you and sell you rubbish, and not real dead souls; but mine are as sound as nuts, picked articles; there is no better artisan than the healthy *mujik*. Just consider the matter: here's Mikhyev, the carriage-builder! Why, no better equipages are made than those he used to build. . . . And Maksim Telyatnikov, the cobbler; whatever he pricked with his awl became a boot at once. . . ." "But they are dead!" Tchitchikov protests and is finally compelled to pay three rubles a soul.

Pliushkin, the almost dehumanized miser, on the other

hand, welcomes Tchitchikov as a deliverer from so many taxable burdens and gives away not only his dead souls, but also all those who have absconded. But perhaps the most disgusting full-length portrait in the book is that of the suspicious tippler and gambler Nozdryov, who not only refuses to sell his deceased serfs, but, angered with Tchitchikov over a game of draughts, exposes his scheme at the very point when he is the object of the town's admiration. Dame Gossip makes a round of calls accompanied by Mistress Rumor, and "The Result is Our Hero's Flight," as Gogol entitles Chapter X.

He departs on fresh enterprises, and new scenes, new landowners appear on the stage, but the landscape is only a different copy of the same spiritual wilderness. Tentyotnikov is another Manilov—not as loving, perhaps, but certainly as useless: we know that he will never reach the end of his universal history of all Russia, but that his serfs will certainly make an end to that portion of Russia which he mismanages. Pyetukh is a prodigal son in the first chapter of festive gluttony, and Khlobuyov, whose mortgaged estate Tchitchikov buys, is a prodigal son in the last chapter, a wanton spendthrift in tatters. Nor is the bored Russian landowner absent, as witness the tedium-tortured Platonov. There is precisely one good man in the book, and only one possessing genuine efficiency. But the former is too old to inspire hope for the future, while the latter, Kostanzoghlo, is of foreign descent. And to match this portrayal of Russia's landowners, Russian officialdom is sketched in strokes, necessarily more cautious, but assuredly none the less telling. "It is impossible to convict you," the shyster jurisconsult tells Tchitchikov; "for before the trial is over, everybody in town will be implicated!"

Throughout the novel one seems to hear, as in an under-

tone, the groans of those millions of live souls whose dead brothers Tchitchikov is buying up from their masters. Yet "Dead Souls" is not a tract against serf-ownership or against anything else. In this utterly unconstrained chronicle, conceived in a sort of Rabelaisian humor, gigantic, embracing an entire race, yet minutely veracious to the least detail, a tragedy is revealed not in the telling but in the fact that such a story could be truthfully told of Holy Russia. Like the old cloak of the poor official in Gogol's story "Shinel," the Russian soul appears in "Dead Souls"—worn out, beyond repair; and, like the three-horse team, the bird-troika, Russia dashes onward, dashes resistlessly and yet without direction. The future of his native land overwhelmed the author: "Is it not thus, like the bold troika which cannot be overtaken, that thou art dashing along, O Russia, my country? . . . O Russia, whither art thou dashing? Reply! But she replies not! . . ." And so does Gogol despair of his country's pettiness, only to sink in awe before her inscrutable, immense inertia.

Russia read Gogol's "Dead Souls," and the story which the great novelist told was a story which every Russian could see and hear in his own midst: the characters, men and women, landed gentry and serf chattels, they were all about him, peopling every province. As the reader followed Tchitchikov on his rascally mission, the cumulative impression of his vast country brought laughter of kindly pity and laughter of contempt, brought smiles and sneers, but most of all it was spiritually depressing; it made men concerned, worried, anxious about the vast futility of their fatherland. And what Russian in all Russia could escape the question which Gogol was asking throughout the book: "Which of you, filled with Christian humility, will dive into the depths of his own soul, and not aloud, but in silence and solitude, in mo-

ments of isolated self-communion, will put to himself the weighty question: And is there not some taint of Tchitchikov in me also?"

Like "Don Quixote," "Dead Souls" is a satire on human vice, human pettiness and vanity; and, like "Don Quixote," it lacks artistic unity. Indeed, one should not say that the book lacks artistic unity; it does not attempt unity of any sort. Perhaps it is not a novel, strictly speaking; the telling of the story may have a beginning, but the story itself is without any artificial boundaries. Gogol never finished it, but what he did finish is not on that account radically affected. "Dead Souls" is a packet of leaves torn at random from the book of life; a collection of unforgettable etchings of human character, overwhelmingly true to nature.

Gogol possesses a Shakespearean, uncanny power of sketching a character full and complete with half a dozen strokes of the pen. One must read his works to appreciate this genius of his to the full. I shall quote only two examples, one of them from "Dead Souls." Tchitchikov's valet Petrushka "always carried about him a special atmosphere of his own, a peculiar smell which corresponded to some extent with that of a dwelling-room; so that it sufficed for him merely to install himself somewhere, to take off his cloak and belongings there, for people to think that the apartment had been inhabited for fully ten years." To match this passport of externals, behold a spiritual passport: "Ivan Ivanovitch was a man of the most accurate and systematic habits. When he had eaten a melon, he would wrap the seeds in a bit of paper and write on it: 'This melon was eaten on such and such a date'; and if there had been a friend at table he would add: 'in the presence of Mr. So-and-So.'" And in one moment you find yourselves completely acquainted with both gentlemen.

We cannot follow Gogol to the last days of his life: the mental depression which claimed him, as it has claimed so many Russian masters since his time; the fit of despondency in which he burned the manuscript of the second part of "Dead Souls"; the religious mysticism in which his last days flickered away. Of Russia's master-novelists, he was the first and the model of his successors. One sometimes wonders how realistic art could possibly surpass itself by surpassing Gogol; and yet, after Gogol, a writer came to Russia who combined Gogol's mastery of life-portrayal with a clearer philosophy of life and with a certain genius of artistic conception which made his novels not only true pictures of human character, but also artistic unities. These excellences were combined as they never had been combined before, in Russian or in any other fiction, in the art of Ivan Turgenev, the prince of novelists.

LECTURE II

THE ART OF IVAN TURGENEV

INNOCENT Mark Twain learned that everything in Rome was the work of Michelangelo. The student of modern Russia finds that all things hark back to Peter the Great. The last two centuries of Russian history are but the continuation of Peter's work by his successors. Peter found Russia an Asiatic, Oriental power; the aim of his whole life was to make Russia European, to westernize Muscovy. To that end he spent years working as a common laborer in Europe, trying to learn Western methods; to that end he moved his capital from ancient Moscow to the modern city on the Baltic which he himself built as a window through which Russia could see and imitate Europe.

Peter was determined to cure Russia of her orientalism, and the remedies he administered were heroic. He began with the Russian exterior; his first step in making Russia European was to make the Russians look European. By imperial decree, he ordered the Russian *boyars* to alter their oriental flowing robes and to cut their beards—these two visible signs of their Asiatic kinship. On April 26, 1698, Peter the Great himself played European barber to the Russian nobility, and on that date, memorable in modern history, Peter's assistant in the work of modernization was his jester, Yakov Turgenev.

Exactly one hundred years after the death of Peter the Great, during the famous conspiracy of December 14, 1825, among those who were exiled to Siberia was one Nikolai

Turgenev, a critic of Russian ideals and an ardent champion of the abolition of serfdom.

These two members of the Turgenev family always come to my mind whenever I think of the greatest of all Turgenevs, the prince of novelists, as he has justly been called, Ivan Turgenev. His ancestor, the great Peter's jester, had done his share to ridicule Russia's orientalism and had held the mirror before the Russian *boyars* while Peter barbered their faces into some European shape. Ivan Turgenev spent a lifetime holding before the Russian people a mirror in which they could see all their shallowness and superficiality, all their ineffectual dreamings and fumings, all their aimless dilettantism, their veneered ignorance, their moral instability, their lack of consistent resolution, their prodigality of futile emotion, and their miserable poverty of will; and, through it all, their oriental inefficiency and their Tartar-like vulgarity and savagery, which made the unwashed lout peep out suddenly through the face of the Russian prince or princess "like a smell of cabbage wafted across the most delicate perfume."

And less than forty years after Ivan Turgenev's cousin, Nikolai, had been exiled to Siberia for holding liberal ideas and advocating the emancipation of the serfs, the novelist's portrayal of Russian peasant life (published under the title of "Memoirs of a Sportsman" in order to get by the censor) made all Russia thrill at the tragic spectacle, and moved Alexander II to become the Czar Emancipator and accord freedom to thirty million souls.

By a curious coincidence, at about the same time when Turgenev's "Memoirs of a Sportsman" caused the bloodless abolition of serfdom in Russia, "Uncle Tom's Cabin" was stirring passions and purposes in America which could end only in a bloody drama. But the coincidence is largely

chronological, for whereas Harriet Beecher Stowe's novel was melodramatic and an undisguised tract, Turgenev's stories were veritable gems of art, marvelous transcriptions of life itself, dispassionately objective, and therefore doubly poignant. Beecher Stowe is an advocate, a pleader; Turgenev is first and last an artist. In the novel "Smoke" it is related—by a confirmed gossip, to be sure—how, when Mrs. Beecher Stowe was in Paris, a Russian serf-owner ventured to seek an introduction to her. "What!" Mrs. Beecher Stowe cried. "He presumes to be introduced to the author of 'Uncle Tom'?" And she gave him a slap on the cheek. "Go away at once!" Now the worst gossip on this long-suffering earth could not have connected such a tale with the author of "Memoirs of a Sportsman."

Ivan Sergeyevitch Turgenev was born on October 28, 1818, at Orel, half-way between Moscow and Kiev. His father, Sergei Turgenev, an officer in a local regiment of cuirassiers, in marrying Varvara Petrovna Litvinova, did not make a bad match, financially speaking, but the marriage was hopeless otherwise. Both natures were high-strung, and the moral instability of the husband was exceeded perhaps only by the wife's rancor and spitefulness. He died when the future novelist was only seventeen years of age, but the mother lived to be seventy. Her son's liberal tendencies and his choice of a literary career wounded her arrogantly aristocratic spirit. She refused her son's request to see her before she died; one of the last deeds of her life was calculated to wreck him financially. Such was Turgenev's mother. The villainous wife of Lavretzky in "A House of Gentlefolk" bears the name of Varvara. Thus much of sweetness and light did the mother's name possess for the son.

Nevertheless he had excellent training. In his youth he

was tutored in foreign languages; but his Russian he learned from a serf on the family estate,—“a philanthropic and philosophic plebeian,”—whose enthusiastic radicalism doubtless influenced the spiritual attitude of the youth. Turgenev was ever a passionate hunter, and his close communion with nature is indicated by the intimate part which nature plays in his novels: clouds and rivers, storm and sunshine, and the forest in spring and in autumn enter into the life of his characters and play the part which they play in folk-songs and in poetry of the highest type.

Notice the nature-environment in which his action moves; it reflects in the finest, most delicate manner the inner, spiritual life of his men and women. Especially is this true of the great scenes in his novels. Take, for instance, the rain-storm in “On the Eve,” which brings Elena and Insarov together in the old abandoned oratory and draws from them both a brave confession of an exalted love. Compare it with the thunderstorm in “First Love,” where an untutored soul first awakes to the strange empire of love and feels himself baffled, intoxicated, and consumed by it. In this thunderstorm, which draws the unsophisticated Voldemar to the Princess Zinaida, the flashes of lightning were “quivering and twitching, like the wing of a dying bird.” Compare it again with the description of that other sudden, sinister tempest in the novel “Spring Freshets,” whose dull vibration echoes and peals in the deep fastness of the forest, whose lurid glare blinds Sanin to all that is fine and holy in life, draws him into the watchman’s wretched hut, and makes him passion-heated wax in the hands of the diabolically voluptuous temptress Marya,—Marya, who is lust incarnate and triumphant, possessing *le terrible don de la familiarité*, who makes wagers with her husband that she can seduce any man he may choose, and gives iron rings to all her victims. Tur-

genev is a poet, and just as his every character is a living being, so nature provides the overtones that swell the fundamental spiritual note of the action depicted and make his descriptions, not mere stage directions, as it were, but inevitable and indispensable elements of a unitary poetic effect.

In appreciating Turgenev's attitude alike toward his country and toward his own literary mission, it should not be forgotten that, in addition to being the greatest artist in the history of fiction, he was also, of all great novelists, the one blessed with the broadest and most genuine education and culture. Himself the guide of Russian thought and the unquestioned master of Russian speech, he made his home in Paris or Baden-Baden; the acknowledged lion of the literary lions of France and an Oxford Doctor of Civil Law, he was so perfectly at home with the ideals and the thought-currents of France, Germany, England, and even America that the shallowness and the thinly veneered vulgarity of his dilettante Russia outraged not only his honest patriotism and his faith in the Russian people, but outraged also his fine esthetic sensibility and his truly educated and cultured mind.

Turgenev found things Russian too disheartening to endure viewing them at close range day by day. His liberalism also, which had courageously expressed itself at the death of Gogol, whom he called "a great man," an offence for which Holy Russia caused his arrest and virtual banishment, made his life in his native land a source of constant danger and irritation. All these causes combined to make him during his later life a willing exile in western Europe. But his dealings with the everlasting Russian traveler and his own periodic visits to his native land allowed so keen an observer abundant opportunity to study Russian life, Rus-

sian humanity, the development of the Russian spirit. Like Gogol himself, Turgenev also found his vision of things Russian clarified by the distance which allowed him perspective and more genuine objectivity. And yet we have only to read his *Reminiscences* and *Letters* to learn how passionately he loved and longed for his native land, which he nevertheless knew too well to admire unreservedly. Yet he would love to live in Russia if he only could: "Russia is now passing through sad and gloomy times," he writes to Tolstoy; "but it is for this very reason that at this moment one feels the gnawing of conscience at living like a foreigner." We are reminded of the words of Lezhnyov in "Rudin": "Russia can get along without any one of us, but no one of us can get along without Russia."

Turgenev's novels are the record of Russia's spiritual growth during his life. Consider that he saw the abolition of serfdom, the rise of Slavophilism and Panslavism, and the beginnings of consistent, organized revolution in his native land, and you will see that million-voiced Russia provided him no end of material. In portraying this life, Turgenev showed a sort of novelistic clairvoyance; he seized concretely the dominant, essentially characteristic notes of Russian life,—he portrayed live human beings in which every Russian recognized something, perhaps all, of himself. And, as in the case of his character Bazarov, and indeed of the whole theme of "Fathers and Children," he was able sometimes to foresee the coming to life of a certain type of human character, a certain movement in Russia, to understand the conditions responsible for it, keenly to analyze its essentials, to anticipate its probable course and destiny, and even to baptize it before it was born,—as he certainly did baptize nihilism before there were any nihilists in Russia. He showed such prophetic insight in his portrayal of

the Russian revolutionist in his novel "Virgin Soil" that some of his enemies accused him of having been in touch with the revolutionists and others saw in him an agent of the secret police, while in reality Turgenev had been throughout only an observer of Russia who saw clearly what most Russians could perceive dimly, if at all. Even so does every great lyric poet publish our own unspoken thoughts and vaguely felt moods until, hearing in his lyrics the voice of our own heart, we feel as though some one has been prying into our own Holy of Holies.

And what is this Russian people which, depicted in terms of universally human portraits, unfolds itself before us in Turgenev's volumes? It is Russia million-voiced and Russia mutely enduring; and Turgenev's portraits, whether life-sized studies or the merest sketch-outlines, are true to nature not only in a physical sense: they possess spiritual verisimilitude. The human appeal which characterizes them all is genuine, born of the life with which the master has conceived them, and in no way the result of conscious or unconscious melodrama. If it can be said at all that Turgenev preaches, it is as life itself is a preachment which those who incline their souls may hear.

The message conveyed in "Memoirs of a Sportsman" is the more poignant and the impression doubly profound precisely because it is conveyed by means of pictures almost severe in their objectivity. From hamlet to hamlet, through forest and steppe and over country road, amid marshland and meadowland, in peasant-hut and feast-hall and dram-shop and counting-house, we follow the huntsman analyst, and dozens of living men and women meet our eyes, utter the burden of their souls, and pass on. Others come, and others, and one forgets to admire the artistry of the writer, so gripping is the living reality of his art.

The "Memoirs" abound in life-comprehending epigrams and master-strokes of description. "Russian maidens love eloquence." "The elder replied . . . languidly and awkwardly, as though he were buttoning his kaftan with half-frozen fingers." "Funtikov will serve us with fish worth a hundred rubles and prepared with tainted butter." The servility of the poor, shiftless Kalinitch earns him barely enough to keep body and soul together, while the peasant Khor moves to economic independence by the path of proud humility which makes him indifferent to formal freedom from serfdom. "Why should I buy my freedom?" he says. "As it is, I know my master." He is a very Socrates in his ironic self-depreciation, and yet perhaps of all Turgenev's peasants he is the most efficient and level-headed. And efficiency is indeed a mark of distinction in Turgenev's sportsman-land, because it is so rare.

A peculiar melancholy, a romantic melancholy at times, becomes ever more profound as we proceed from hut to hut, and the atmosphere of superstitious awe in the presence of a world of inscrutable, immense, malignant destiny is likewise an atmosphere of romance: the world is no mere machine for the animistic minds of the five lads in "Byezhin Meadow." The peasant's soul gropes in trepidation and spiritual squalor in a world whose natural beauties only heighten by contrast the desolate state of man. The hopeless misery of the poor is the more pathetic because it seems to leave the ordinary landed proprietor utterly unmoved and unaware of it. In these serf-lives, which to the reader are so intensely human, the masters of Russia's peasantry see no humanity whatever. Zvyerkov's wife is kindness itself and makes the life of her maids "a paradise visibly realized," but she simply refuses them permission to marry. When the servant Arina begs to be released from service,

so that she may follow the call of her heart, her prayer is to her mistress an evidence of rank ingratitude, and when, thwarted in the normal expression of her love, the poor maid becomes its prey, she is banished into misery.

A counting-house clerk is asked whether merchants give their servants larger wages than do landed proprietors. "God forbid!" he answers. "Why, a merchant would pitch you out of doors by the scruff of the neck if you were to ask wages from him. No; you must live in faith and in fear with a merchant." Life is one endless round of gloomy prospects,—“it is not cheerful to enter a peasant's hut by night.” The indifference toward the serf's woes is loftier in the master, more brutal in the counting-house clerk and overseer, but in either case it appears implacable, and it is implacable not because of premeditated malice and cruelty, but because of a certain lack of sympathy, perhaps lack of imagination: the peasant is born to endure, it is his lot; if he protests, his very rebelliousness proves him unnatural, worthless. A master owes it to his serf to punish him. "Whom he loveth, he chasteneth, you know that yourself," Mardary Apollonitch quotes in self-justification when censured for his cruelty. And the whipped serf agrees with his master. "I deserved it," he says sententiously. "We are not whipped for trifles, that's not the custom with us,—naw, naw!"

The same stolid submission to implacable authority and pitiless injustice is portrayed in two other, longer stories, "Mumu" and "The Inn." The laundress Tatyana is called by the majordomo: "The mistress has hunted a bridegroom for thee." "I obey, Gavril Andreitch. But who has been appointed as my bridegroom?" "Kapiton the shoemaker." "I obey, sir." "He is a reckless man—that's a fact. But the mistress pins her hopes on thee in that respect." "I obey,

sir." In "The Inn," a house-serf, Akim, has by long endeavor managed to establish himself as an innkeeper. But his social standing does not allow him to hold legal title to his property. Naum, a cunning young laborer-merchant, insinuates himself into the graces of Akim's wife, induces her to give him all her husband's savings, and with that money buys Akim's inn from the landed proprietress and turns both innkeeper and wife out of their own house. Incendiary anger flames up for an hour in Akim's heart, but he submits to his fate, pardons every one, sets out on a pilgrimage to the holy places of Russia, and to his mistress, who has wronged him beyond all words, he keeps sending blessed bread from sundry sanctuaries.

At times, to be sure, the serf's rebelliousness rises to a pitch of genuine terror, as in "The Wolf," where the very despair and helplessness of a peasant, forced by his misery to steal timber and caught in the act, makes him awesome and hypnotizes the wolfish forester into releasing him, albeit the latter remains disgusted with his one manifestation of human pity. Nor must we forget Ivan Suhikh in "Old Portraits." By a mere subterfuge he is taken away from a master whom he loves to one whom he loathes utterly. After protests and threats, he apparently submits to his fate. But one fine day he splits his master's head open with an axe. "I killed him," he tells the police. "I told him I would do it, and I did it. Bind me."

But Turgenev's theme in "Memoirs of a Sportsman" is not merely the oppression of man by man. Already the reader has been warned against mistaking this work for a tract against serf-ownership. Turgenev portrays Russian life as he finds it, and while man-made misery is perhaps most clearly apparent in it, it is neither the most tragic nor the most profound. There is the tragedy of life for which

no one in particular is culpable, a tragedy of circumstance, a nature-born, fate-begotten tragedy, to witness which is an experience the more agonizing because it does not allow one the relief of growing indignant at the villain-oppressor. And more impressive too than the vast misery of Russia is the Russian's capacity of endurance. The poet Tiutchev has rightly put it in the couplet which heads Turgenev's sketch "Living Holy Relics":

"O native land of patient fortitude,
Land of the Russian folk art thou!"

"Wonderful is the way in which the Russians die," Turgenev says. For sheer pathos and for the beauty of pathos, this sketch is easily the masterpiece in the collection. The love of plain earthly happiness and the love of the heavenly Christ blend most touchingly in the patient waiting of paralyzed Lukerya for the angel of death. A dancing beauty in her youth, she is now resigned to her fate; she wishes no cure; she finds a strange happiness in the very absence of any hope, in her very resignation. "Don't touch me, Master; don't take me to the hospital. . . . Who can help another? Who can enter into this soul? Sometimes I lie here alone like this, and it seems as though there were not another person in all the world except myself. I alone am living. And I feel as though something were blessing me. Thoughts come to me—even wonderful thoughts." Alone in her hopeless illness, her mind does not beg for sympathy, it lavishes sympathy on others. From her miserable death-bed she begs the landed proprietor to have the quit-rents of the serfs reduced,—“for they are very poor. But I need nothing. I am content with everything.” The power of pain and suffering to regenerate a soul and bring it closer to God and Christ,—this typically Russian text upon which

almost every novel of Dostoyevsky is a sermon, is uttered here with unforgettable, concentrated intensity and pathos.

Perhaps the most significant way of entering into Turgenev's philosophy of life is by following its development through his six longer novels, which he himself advised us to read in the order in which he wrote them: "Dmitri Rudin"; "A Nobleman's Nest"; "On the Eve"; "Fathers and Children"; "Smoke"; "Virgin Soil"; the progressive revelation of nineteenth-century Russia, from the decay of the old nobility to the rebellious rise of the new democracy.

Dmitri Rudin, the hero of Turgenev's first great novel, has been called the typical embodiment of Russian character. Rudin is a man of lofty ideals, or rather he is loftily eloquent about ideals. Freedom, nobility of soul, moral courage, self-sacrifice are his daily topics. A most magnetic personality is Dmitri Rudin,—“that man not only knows how to move you, he lifts you up, he does not let you stand still, he stirs you to the depths and sets you on fire.” He is truly generous; one doubts if in his nature there is an iota of mean selfishness; a sincere and an ardent idealist, he himself lives in the world of his glorious ideas of human emancipation. But exactly of what stuff is this champion of independence really made? His eloquent advocacy of human rights and freedom and his contagious enthusiasm captivate Natalia, the daughter of Rudin's hostess. Rudin himself loves her devotedly. But his radicalism makes him lose favor in the eyes of Natalia's family. The time for words has passed; arrived is the time for action. What are the lovers to do? Natalia looks to her brave young model of independence to utter the decisive words.

“We must submit,” Rudin says.

Whereupon the young woman bursts out in words of spiritual disenchantment: “You spoke so often of self-sacri-

fice," she tells Rudin; "but do you know that, had you said to me now, this hour: 'I love you, but I cannot marry. I do not answer for the future; give me your hand and come with me!'—do you know that I would have come, that I would have confronted anything with you? But, alas, it is a long way from words to deeds!"

There is your Russian man as Turgenev saw him. His ideals are noble, but he is too inefficient spiritually, too weak-willed to translate them into action. His ideas are not motive forces; there is a deal of conversation, but it leads to no decision. He may be "upright, honorable, and simple," like Gagin in "Asya," a thoroughly lovable figure, or, like Ivan Afanasievitch in "Pyetushkov," he may be common, coarse, even unsightly, but in either case he is languid, without tenacity or inner ardor. A man who translates his thinking into concrete action may experience both fear and hope in anticipating the conclusions of his reasoning. But where will-energy is divorced from the rest of one's being, the froth of effusive emotion and the sparkle of clever wit and reckless thought-abandon are alike unavailing. If the mind feeds on mere ideas, then the more lofty the ideas, the more deadly is their narcotic influence: it lulls the soul of man to futile thought-spinning and inactivity; with all his aspiration, he remains superfluous, a stupid fifth wheel to the cart of actual life. So we read in "The Diary of a Superfluous Man": "I am falling into speculation, I think: that is a bad sign—am I not beginning to turn coward?" And again: "Emotional effusions are like licorice-root: when you take your first suck at it, it does n't seem bad, but it leaves a very bad taste in your mouth afterwards."

For such a human misfit one moment of genuine achievement would atone for an entire life-course of unfinished episodes. Rudin almost tastes the joy of atonement in the

struggles of '48; but Tchulkaturin, in "The Diary of a Superfluous Man," after living insignificantly to no purpose, is denied even the blessing of finding some meaning in death. He floats away with the last snows of early spring. As the messengers of death creep through his lungs, he has only one consolation: "In becoming annihilated, I shall cease to be superfluous."

Rudin fails because he is deficient in will-energy. A different man is Fyodor Lavretzky, the hero of Turgenev's next novel, "Dvoryanskoye Gnyesdo," variously translated in English as "A Nobleman's Nest," "A House of Gentlemen," or "Liza." Here we have high ideals accompanied by strong will,—but here also life ends in futility: it is Lavretzky's past which makes a happy future impossible for him. Turgenev has lavished loving care on Lavretzky. The hero's father, an Anglomaniac, has sought to make of his son a hardy English gentleman; instead of producing an English gentleman, however, he turns out a man strong with men, but the easiest imaginable victim in the hands of a scheming woman like Varvara Pavlovna, whom he loves and marries before he knows what he is about. His dream of perfect bliss is destined to a rude shock when he discovers his wife's utter infidelity—he leaves her in Europe and, after training himself for his life's work, returns to Russia to till the soil in a civilized manner. Lavretzky lacks all the poetic flights of Rudin, but he is an efficient, sensible man who could bless Russia if only he were not such a rarity there.

One could scarcely imagine a woman more likely to be Lavretzky's ideal comrade in life than the heroine, Liza Kalitin. "In the most hidden nooks of the forest," Turgenev writes in "Yakov Pasyunkov," "dreaming in primeval denseness, under fallen trees and thickets, grow fragrant

flowers." A fragrant flower, half opened, dreaming in primeval innocent goodness, is Liza. She is a rare creature. She "has no words of her own," but she has thoughts of her own, and she goes her own way; it is not her custom to ask others what she should do. From the first moment we have known her, we are certain that Panshin, the trivial, complacent, egotistic dilettante Panshin, has not the shadow of a chance of winning either her respect or her love. Yet she is young, innocent, fresh; love and passion are unspelled words to her. Turgenev has pictured greater, stronger women, but never so perfect a maiden as Liza. "Thoroughly imbued with a sense of duty, with the fear of wounding any one whatsoever, with a kind and gentle heart, she loved every one in general and no one in particular; God alone she loved with rapture, timidly, tenderly. Lavretzky was the first to break in upon her tranquil inner life." The inevitable melancholy of the unfortunate Lavretzky first evokes her pity; she tries to wake the unhappy husband to forgiveness for his undeserving wife, to purge his soul of bitterness. Gradually the woman's fresh, sympathetic charm and the man's grim tenderness deepen the friendship between them.

In "The Diary of a Superfluous Man," Turgenev portrays the miracle wrought by love in the soul of a dismal man: "I began to blossom out in spirit. Everything in me and round about me underwent such an instantaneous change! My whole life was illuminated by love—literally my whole life, down to the smallest detail—like a dark, deserted chamber into which a candle has been brought." Even such a miracle of transfiguration does Liza's friendship unwittingly produce in the life of Lavretzky. Neither of them has translated into words the actual character of the relation which binds them to each other. Then, by accident, La-

vretzky reads a report of his wife's death. Friendship declares itself to be love, for the man is now free to begin life once more.

But Lavretzky's wife is not dead. Varvara Pavlovna returns, and poor Liza enters a convent, while Lavretzky lives on, or rather, continues existing.

Love, happiness, fate: the dynamic, the goal, the lord of life; the one sets us afire, the other lures us on forever, the third lavishes on us unsought and unappreciated blessings or damns us undeservedly. Three powers in life, they are not for Turgenev three mystic entities; they are life itself. For what is love but the thirst for the thrill of genuine, intense living? In "The Region of Dead Calm," Veretyev tells the woman he loves: "Do you know why I drink? Look yonder at that swallow. . . . Do you see how boldly it manages its tiny body, and hurls it wherever it wishes? Now it has soared aloft, now it has darted downward. It has even piped with joy: do you hear? So that's why I drink, Masha, in order to feel those same sensations which that swallow experiences. . . . There is passion; . . . it produces the same effect. That is why I love you." Love is the longing freely to absorb another's life, to be absorbed into another. But that freedom is also a slavery—indeed, the quintessence of slavery. "In love there is no equality, no so-called free union of souls and other ideal things invented at their leisure by German professors. No; in love one person is the slave, the other is the sovereign, and not without cause do the poets prate of the chains imposed by love. Yes, love is a chain, and the heaviest of chains at that."

And just as love brings chains with it, so the longing for happiness brings disenchantment; the surest way not to attain it is to set out in pursuit of it. "Happiness is not to

be captured by battle. But we must not forget that not happiness but human dignity is the chief goal of life." So writes Turgenev in "Faust": "Life is a heavy toil. Renunciation, constant renunciation—that is its secret meaning, its solution; not the fulfilment of cherished ideas and dreams, no matter how lofty they may be, but the fulfilment of duty—that is what men must take heed to; not until he imposes upon himself chains, the iron chains of duty, can he attain to the end of his course without falling."

But herein precisely is the essence of Turgenev's melancholy: man, who understands this scale of values, whose noble soul admires the prospect of ascending that scale,—man finds himself thwarted in his upward striving by a Fate which dominates his life, and yet a Fate of his own making. "As clouds are first formed by the exhalations from the earth, rise up from its bosom, then separate themselves from it, and bear over it either blessings or ruin, just so around each one of us and from us ourselves is formed—how shall I express it?—is formed, a sort of atmosphere which afterwards acts destructively or salutarily upon us ourselves. This I call Fate. In other words, and to put it simply: each person makes his own fate, and it makes each person."

This is a heroic philosophy, is it not? It should make one optimistic about the initial chance one has in his struggle with Destiny. But the same Alexyei who philosophizes so bravely in "A Correspondence" ends by lamenting his own fate. "And what a fate is mine!" he writes after he has sunk to sensual insignificance. "In my youth I was resolutely determined to conquer heaven for myself. . . . Later on, I fell to dreaming about the welfare of all mankind, the prosperity of my fatherland. Then that passed off: I thought only of how I might manage my domestic, my family life . . . and I tripped over an ant-hill—and flop! I

went headlong to the ground, and into the grave. What master-hands we Russians are at winding up in that fashion! . . ."

There is scarcely any more masterly example of the unutterable pathos of which Turgenev is capable than the closing paragraph of "A Nobleman's Nest." "'And the end?' perchance some dissatisfied reader will say. 'And what became of Lavretzky? Of Liza?' But what can one say about people who are still alive, but who have already departed from the earthly arena? Why revert to them? They say that Lavretzky paid a visit to that distant convent where Liza had hidden herself—and saw her. In going from one choir to another she passed close to him—passed with the even, hurriedly submissive gait of a nun—and did not cast a glance at him; only the lashes of the eye that was turned toward him trembled almost imperceptibly, and her haggard face was bowed a little lower than usual—and the fingers of her clasped hands, interlaced with her rosary, were pressed more tightly to one another. What did they both think, what did they both feel? Who knows? Who shall say? There are moments in life, there are feelings . . . we can only indicate them,—and pass by."

One has to read the great love-scenes and the scenes of great pathos in Turgenev to appreciate what a chaste, what a delicately tender spirit he was. But it is not with Turgenev's masterly portrayal of love that we are at present mainly concerned. Ask the question: What makes human life fail of greatness, what saps the energies of men, what makes the nobility of their thought ineffectual? In "Dmitri Rudin" we have the first demon of failure: weak-willed instability of spirit. In "A Nobleman's Nest" Lavretzky's life ends in unrealized futile aspirations because of the prejudicial influence of past folly, which claims one's mature

life as atonement in the stern course of conventional expiation. The weak will of man himself; the prejudicial influence of society; the third tragic demon, nature and circumstance, is portrayed in Turgenev's next novel, "On the Eve."

In many ways "On the Eve" is Turgenev's masterpiece, although the novel "Fathers and Children," which followed it, appears stronger and created a greater stir. Like Diogenes of old, Turgenev hunted over Russia with a lantern to find a *man*, a stern, strong personality of vigorous will, a man of consistent action rather than an eloquent dispenser of ideals. His failure to find that type in Russian life is itself a criticism of Russian life. To hold before the eyes of Russia this model of moral virility, Turgenev wrote "On the Eve." The title, seemingly puzzling at first, is very apt. "On the Eve" of what? "On the Eve" of true self-realization, true greatness for Russia: that is to say, in "On the Eve" Turgenev the artist depicts the men and women Russia must possess before the dawn of a new era can illumine the Russian twilight.

Elena, the heroine, is Turgenev's strongest, noblest woman. She is not a paragon of beauty. Indeed, Turgenev has made her the more compelling by the very blemishes in her, which only heighten the effect of the charms that she does possess. She yearns for a living ideal that would compel her unqualified devotion. "The life that surrounded her seemed at its best trifling and unbearable. 'How live without love? To love no one!' she thought, and her heart was filled with a strange and indefinable desire. . . . She would be oppressed with a vague longing for something, she knew not what, something that none before her had ever wished for, something that none in all Russia had ever imagined."

But she is also proud, stern, implacable in her demands: she is no sentimental enthusiast. One feels that this girl of

nineteen would be a very priestess of love, and brave danger, and death itself, could she find an ideal, a cause worth her devotion. She could love so perfectly the man who could perfectly meet her demands, only because she could love absolutely no other. She may be of the sex which men please themselves to call weaker, but she is not lacking in strength, either of will or of emotion. "Any exhibition of weakness irritated her, stupidity made her angry, a lie she could never be brought to pardon, nothing could move her when once she had formed a resolution. . . ." Such a rare nature, in which lofty aspirations combine with demands as lofty, in which longing emotions are grounded in indomitable will, a nature tender, but not weakly tender, susceptible to the least flutter of emotion, yet firm as a rock in its refusal to rest satisfied with unrealized ideals,—such a woman Turgenev has painted in Elena Nikolaevna.

But who is to answer the call of this rare soul? Two men love Elena: Shubin, the irrepressible artist, a sculptor, is a very butterfly of flitting, unstable emotions. Not one note of sternness sobers the song of his life. Undoubtedly he has talent, yet he takes seriously neither his art nor himself. Simpering damsels like Zoe he could perhaps make happy, or flower-girls like Annette, but Elena he frankly confesses himself unable to understand.

The other suitor, Bersenyev, is a scholar, a bookish university valedictorian, calm, intellectual, nothing if not serious, with a high conception of his academic future, eager to write a ponderous history of something or other. He is tender-hearted, too; generous, as only Russians can be generous,—witness his self-effacing, honorable loyalty to his friend who becomes his rival, so masterfully portrayed in the course of the novel. But Bersenyev's life is the theoretic life; one doubts if it is in him to cast everything aside and

burn his life out to light any torch whatever. And it is that sort of man alone that Elena Nikolaevna can possibly love. Though she likes his honest devotion to his academic task, we feel that Bersenyev lacks at once the romance and the strength of spirit that would be necessary to win Elena.

"I love Elena; Elena loves you!" the artist Shubin informs Bersenyev. "What a lovely night, quiet, fresh, and full of shadows! . . . Believe me, there will never be such another glorious night as this in all your life!"

But the future professor goes home, lights a candle, puts on his dressing-gown, and taking from his bookcase Raumer's "History of the Hohenstaufen," begins reading from the page where he had left off the night before.

Shubin the artist is too effervescent a spirit for Elena; Bersenyev is a mind too calm. And thus Elena's youth, like water beneath a frozen stream, flows on silently and quickly, in outward inactivity, but in inward uneasiness and strife.

It is one of the points of this story which made it a criticism of Russian character that the nation which produced such a woman as Elena could not supply a corresponding man. Turgenev finds his man outside of Russia, as if to hold before Russian men at once a picture of their own insufficiency and a model of possible regeneration. Dmitri Insarov, the hero, is a Bulgarian patriot. Himself orphaned by a Turkish massacre, his whole life is dominated by one concrete idea. Goodness, wisdom, courage, self-sacrifice, nobility, love, hate, life and death—all these possess for him one clear, concrete meaning: the liberation of his country from the Turks. Shubin sketches him well in speaking to his philosophic friend: "Talents, none at all; poetry, deuced little; capacity for hard work, enormous; memory, almost as enormous; mind, neither discursive nor deep, but healthy and quick; speech, dry, energetic, and even eloquent when

he gets upon his—between ourselves we may say—stupid Bulgaria. . . . But further, you will never be on such a footing with him as to say *thou*, and no one ever was. I, of course, an artist, can be no favorite of his; and I am proud that I cannot. Cold-hearted, cold-hearted, and capable of grinding us all to powder! He is attached to his country; not like our empty-heads who merely flatter the common people; but he tries to unite the whole nation in one common work. Thus his task is more easy and more intelligible: to drive out the Turks, that is all; that is the work to which he dedicates himself. But, thank God, all these fine qualities do not take with women. There is nothing attractive, no charm about him; he is not like either of us." Which last remark shows Shubin a better judge of Insarov, whom he has just met, than of women like Elena.

From the very first we know that she will love Insarov. "He not only talks," she writes in her diary; "he acts, and will act."

"Do you love your country dearly?" she asks him.

"As yet I cannot say," he answers. "Only when a man has died for his country can you truly say that he loved it."

"Why is he not a Russian?" she thinks. "No, he never could be that."

Action, not mere words; decisions, not mere sighs and longings: such are the motive forces in this man. He does not scatter his energies. Turgenev saw Russia flapping its million wings enthusiastically, but not knowing whither to fly; dabbling in everything, accomplishing nothing. But listen to his Bulgar hero: "Just think," he tells the Russian woman, "the veriest peasant, the lowest beggar in Bulgaria, not a whit less than I myself, awaits one and the same thing; we have all but one and the same thing in view—and think what strength, what assurance, this unity of aim must give us!"

Again we read in Elena's famous diary: "I think that the reason why Dmitri is so tranquil is because he has devoted his entire self to one work, to the realization of one dream. What can disturb him? He who gives himself up entirely, entirely, entirely, is superior to all contingencies. It is not *I* wish, but *it* wishes."

Can we trace the growth of the heroic love which follows? Determined not to allow his passion for Elena to interfere with his patriotic mission, Insarov would stifle all emotion and leave her. But she proves herself his equal. For the sake of him and his ideal she abandons her family, her native land, and starts with him to share his perilous life in Bulgaria. An attack of quick consumption kills Insarov on the way; Elena goes to Bulgaria alone to continue his work, and is lost among the oppressed compatriots of her husband.

A noble tragedy is "On the Eve," but a tragedy just the same. The spiritual weakling Shubin lives and prospers on his idle fancies; Insarov, the grim hero, is stricken by hostile nature and dies. What avails his master-soul before that hacking cough? Life is a strange puzzle. "It will often happen that a man, with involuntary apprehension, asks himself: Can it be that I am already thirty—forty—fifty years old? How is it that life passes so quickly? How is it that death presses so quickly upon us? Death is like a fisherman who has caught a fish in his net, but leaves it for a while in the water; the fish still swims about and fancies itself to be free, but the net encircles it, and the fisherman seizes hold of it whenever the fancy takes him."

Profoundly disenchanted Turgenev was with Russia. And yet, even while he was writing "Rudin," "A Nobleman's Nest," "On the Eve," a new Russian type was coming into being, a new generation with new ideals which were

to set Russia afire, to give birth to Russian Insarovs and multiply the Elenas in Russia. A spirit of denial, of destructive radicalism was arising, as usual beginning with mere ideas, mental attitudes, but destined to pass into action with a definite goal, political or economic, and lead to all the noble bravery which lies buried in the frozen wastes of Siberia. This new spirit Turgenev analyzes in "Fathers and Children," the most famous Russian book, and the one containing Turgenev's strongest Russian hero, Evgeny Bazarov.

The contrast is between the respectable, orthodoxly radical, sentimental, formal, noble-hearted fathers and the blatantly radical, vigorous, defiant, negating children. A new generation has sprung up, and to it the old honors, principles, and duties mean nothing. The father of young Bazarov, an old regimental doctor, speaks in terms of profound respect of the noble-born Arcady's father and uncle. But the son has only contempt for their respectability and for the respectability of all other old fogies, while well-born Arcady himself looks up to the son of the poor regimental doctor.

Turgenev's hero utterly scorns all romanticism, all poetry, all conventional principles. Bred on the materialism of Büchner, he is a destructive genius, but a genius of unquestioned force. Along with the democracy of this modern son of the soil, there is a good deal of crude materialism and a certain cruel, even coarse irony.

Absolute independence, absolute freedom from all conventions, from all prejudices—this is Bazarov's aim. His aim is frankly destructive. The work of building up he leaves for future generations; his age needs men to tear down, to level this civilization of lies. For this task young Arcady, son of the aristocracy, proves too weak. The chil-

dren of the plebeians must do this work also, as they have done all other work in Russia. "You lack boldness, wickedness," Bazarov tells the youth when they finally part, "but in turn you are endowed with a youthful audacity and ardor. That does not suffice for the work which we others are pursuing. And then, you gentlemen cannot go beyond a certain indignation or a generous resignation, things which do not signify much. You think you are great men, you think yourselves at the pinnacle of human perfection when you have ceased to beat your servants; and we—we ask only to fight with one another and to beat. Our dust reddens your eyes, our mire soils you; you are truly not of our height; you admire yourselves complacently, you take pleasure in reproaching yourselves; all that bores us; we have other things to do than to admire and reproach ourselves; we must have other men broken on the wheel."

Perhaps the most pathetic thing in the book, from the point of view of literary art, is the trembling admiration with which Bazarov's old parents watch over their son, whom they at once revere and fear. The cold radicalism of the son is in tragic contrast to the loving orthodoxy of the mother and the heart-breaking effort which the father makes to keep up with his son's progressiveness, not to be a tedious old fossil in his own child's eyes. The scene where the son, leaving his parents after a three days' visit because their loving attention gives him no opportunity to work, and the courage with which the father receives the crushing news, is a scene which, for suppressed pathos, is scarcely to be matched in all fiction.

Bazarov does return to his parents; a wound which he receives while treating a peasant suffering from typhus infects him with the disease and claims his life. The nihilist, who in his life denied all, is himself denied by death.

"Fathers and Children" caused a national tempest in Russia. Both the fathers and the children thought themselves outraged in Turgenev's novel. Especially the new generation felt wounded, forever hurt by Turgenev, and it did not forgive him to his very death. Turgenev's was the unenviable lot of the sane mediator, the lot of Socrates, the lot of all who are too penetrating to go to either extreme and too honest to join either of the two parties of narrow thinkers which comprise the majority in all lands and particularly in Russia. In his "Poems in Prose" Turgenev pictures those two types. On the one hand the two toilers, anxious to get hold of a bit of rope with which the authorities have hanged the man who has tried to liberate them, for "they say that that brings the greatest good luck to a house." For these toilers, for those who exploited their toil, and for those whose orthodoxy regarded the old order as divinely ordained, "Fathers and Children" was doubtless too radical. For another class it was too conservative: for those whose rebellious souls found no virtue whatever in the established order, and even more for the type of man who always stirred Turgenev's sarcasm—the brainless dolt whose meager capital of intelligence exhausted itself in bold criticism. "You are behind the times," says the Fool in another "Poem in Prose." And society is impressed by the Fool's self-assured criticism. "There is a career for fools among cowards."

The failure of Russia to understand his works, her hatred for the man who revealed her true state, outraged Turgenev's sensibilities as artist and man. There is no hatred in Turgenev's next two novels, "Smoke" and "Virgin Soil," but there is less pity. Turgenev pictures the utter futility of the Russian society man and woman, frivolous, veneered sepulchers of corruption; the futility also of the unkempt,

disheveled, loud-voiced, word-mongering radicals; the utter inefficiency of those who would upset Russian society without having any well-thought-out ideals either of tearing down or of building up.

I wish I might dwell further on that immortal life-size portrait of the Russian society lioness—the portrait of Irina Pavlovna—in “Smoke.” But it was not the portrait of Irina Pavlovna that Russia did not like: it was the judgment of Russia, expressed in the words of Litvinov, the hero, expressed even more tragically by that derelict of a man, Potugin.

The Slavophiles and Panslavists, who wished to shut Russia from the rest of the world, who deluded themselves with complacent dreams about Russia’s supremacy, exasperated Turgenev. “Nothing to compare with Russia, indeed!” Potugin exclaims in “Smoke.” “Our bristles, for instance, are large and strong, because our pigs are poor; our hides are stout and thick, because our cows are thin; our tallow’s rich because it’s boiled down with half the flesh. . . . They talk to me about our inventive faculty! The inventive faculty of the Russians! Why, our worthy farmers complain bitterly and suffer loss because there’s no satisfactory machine for drying grain in existence, to save them from the necessity of putting their sheaves in ovens, as they did in the days of Rurik; these ovens are fearfully wasteful—just as our bast shoes and our Russian mats are—and they are constantly getting on fire. The farmers complain, but still there’s no sign of a drying machine. And why is there none? Because the German farmer doesn’t need them; he can thresh his wheat as it is, so he doesn’t bother to invent one, and we . . . are not capable of doing it! Not capable—that’s all about it! Try as we may!

From this day forward I declare whenever I come across one of these rough diamonds, these self-taught Russian geniuses, I shall say: 'Stop a minute, my worthy friend! Where's that drying machine? Let's have it!'

And the answer comes from the young painter Gagin in "Asya," whose studies show life and truth, but whose drawing is slovenly and inaccurate, and who has not finished a single picture. "I have not studied as I should have done, and that cursed Slavonic laxity is asserting itself. When one dreams of work, he soars like an eagle; it seems as though he could move the earth from its place; but in the execution he immediately grows slack and weary."

Why is this novel called "Smoke"? As Litvinov the hero turns his back on Baden-Baden and its Russian colony, "the wind blew facing the train; whitish clouds of steam, some singly, others mingled with other darker clouds of smoke, whirled in endless file past the window at which Litvinov was sitting. He began to watch this steam, this smoke. Sometimes the wind changed, the line bent to right or left, and suddenly the whole mass vanished, and at once reappeared at the opposite window; then again the huge tail was flung out, and again it veiled Litvinov's view of the vast plain of the Rhine. He gazed and gazed, and a strange reverie came over him. . . . 'Smoke, smoke,' he repeated several times; and suddenly it all seemed as smoke to him, everything, his own life, Russian life—everything human, and especially everything Russian. All smoke and steam, he thought; all seems forever changing, on all sides new forms, phantoms flying after phantoms, while in reality it is all the same and the same again; everything hurrying, flying towards something, and everything vanishing without a trace, attaining to nothing; another wind blows, and all is dashing

in the opposite direction, and there again the same untiring, restless, and useless gambols! 'Smoke, smoke, nothing but smoke!' "

Smoke is not lacking in "Virgin Soil," but through the smoke we can see undoubted fire. Young Russia, as Turgenyev pictures it in this last of his great novels, does not show very much greater capacity for action than it does in "Smoke"; the builders of the radiant to-morrows still spend their time in "those nocturnal, interminable discussions, which in such proportions and in such a form can hardly be characteristic of any other race whatsoever." But there is a radical change: discussions are their own reward in "Smoke"; in "Virgin Soil," on the other hand, arguments, projects, speculations are very clearly wearisome to those taking part in them; very keen is the conscious thirst for action. Of this indifference to eloquent words and this insistent demand for action, two characters in the book are the embodiment; and of the two, the man Markelov plays a secondary rôle, even though he precipitates the dénouement. Markelov is headstrong, grim, "like John the Baptist when he had eaten the locusts,—the locusts alone without any honey"; he is not balanced enough for efficient leadership; but he is no Rudin; he is on more than speaking terms with his ideals. Genuine to the heart and aware of worse prospects than the scaffold, he can be cowed by no threats whatever. The peasants to whom he preaches revolt themselves betray him to the authorities; but his own failure makes him no pessimist about the cause as a whole. "I did not set about it rightly," he says, and takes his medicine with a firm jaw and without heroics.

But Marianna, the heroine, is the very personification of the new Russia longing to burn itself in the all-consuming fire of actual combat. When her lover Nezhdanov tells her

about his meeting with Markelov and Solomin, this young daughter of a dishonest official is impatient about all he has to say of their discussions; one question alone fires her whole being: When is the struggle to begin, and where, and how can she enter it without delay? She rejoices that her hands are growing red and hard; and she is in instant expectation that, if necessary, she will ascend the scaffold. "Do you believe in the cause, Marianna?" Nezhdanov asks her, and she draws herself up and raises her head: "Yes, Alexyei, I do believe in it. I believe in it with all the powers of my soul. And I will consecrate my whole life to that cause! To my very last breath!"

Nezhdanov himself is built of a different fiber. This student, whom men of action trust and who inspires valorous men, is himself the battle-ground of Rudins and Insarovs. Ever longing to lose himself in self-forgetting struggle, he ever finds the fountains of action drying up in his soul. He writes verses and is ashamed of it; he would be proud of converting peasants to the cause, but their vodka nauseates him. "A romanticist of realism," the effervescent, timorous firebrand Pakhlin calls him. From the very start he is foredoomed to failure. He curses "this nervousness, this sensitiveness, this impressionability, fastidiousness" which are his very inheritance. "They say that one must learn the language of the common people, learn their habits and customs," he writes, wearing a stinking burgher kaftan. "Nonsense, nonsense, nonsense! One must believe in what one says, and talk as he pleases! But when I begin to speak it is like a guilty man, and I keep begging forgiveness." An insuperable barrier separates him from the masses whom he would awaken. And since he cannot live his life on the only terms he honors, he would not live at all. "I did not know how to *simplify* myself; the only thing that was left was to

erase myself altogether," he writes in his farewell letter to Marianna. He is not afraid of the prison walls. "But to be incarcerated for the sake of a cause in which one does not believe is—entirely unfitting." So he blows out his brains.

Marianna marries Solomin. Of all Turgenev's characters, Solomin is the least typically Russian, if we can judge of what is typically Russian from Turgenev's gallery of portraits. But the Russian workmen to whom Nezhdanov is an alien obey Solomin like a master, respect him as their superior, yet treat him as an equal. "He is one of us," they declare proudly. He is the very reverse of a firebrand, and he even quenches enthusiasm, but he inspires trust. Men wonder at themselves that he compels their respect and admiration; but they respect and admire him notwithstanding. At first glance he strikes Marianna as indefinite, impersonal. "But the more she scrutinized him, the more she listened to his remarks, the stronger did her feeling of confidence—precisely that, of confidence—in him become. That calm, not exactly awkward, but ponderous man not only could not lie, dissimulate: one could rely upon him as upon a stone wall. He would not betray; he would understand and uphold."

Solomin talks little, not because he has no thoughts, but perhaps because he has no doubts about his thoughts. "I always know what I am talking about," he simply informs the peppery, contemptible upholder of reaction, Kalomyetzev. He has grown up from the soil, and he knows that soil full well; he has no roseate illusions about the common people like Marianna, and he is thoroughly acquainted with the Russian nobleman's inadequacy to cope with the problems of Russia. This is a man who works hard and well, and without eloquence; he cannot be stampeded either by

cowardly panic or by firebrand enthusiasm. He is thorough; he is genuine; he is likewise cautious.

He establishes a school and a hospital at the factory which he superintends, but he refuses to allow the distribution of revolutionary pamphlets among the men under his charge. He is not anxious to evade death, not he; but he thinks too much of his life to sacrifice it recklessly; he is too thrifty for that. He expects no quick solution of Russia's problems, nor does he believe in quick solutions. He believes in daily simple service. He can distinguish between the great and the merely grand: Marianna sighs for heroic sacrifice, but he tells her: "In my opinion, to comb the hair of a scabby little child is a sacrifice—and a great sacrifice, of which not many are capable. You will wash pots like a dirty-faced scullery-maid, and pluck fowls. . . . And then, who knows but you will save the fatherland?"

"I should like to justify your expectations," she says; "and then—I should be ready to die."

"No, live—live! . . . You are already, all of you Russian women, more capable and more lofty than we men!" And therein speaks Turgenev himself, whose disenchantment with the weak longings of Russian manhood found consolation and hope in the idealistic strength and energy of Russia's women. Almost all his genuine heroes are heroines. In picturing Solomin's recognition of this truth, Turgenev pays a rare tribute to the intelligence of the factory superintendent. It is an essential part of Turgenev's philosophy of life, this failure to find spiritual strength and energy of soul in Russia's manhood. Homeric physical strength is in Kharlov, the "Lear of the Steppes"; Gerasim, in "Mumu," has brutal might, but the motive agencies in the life of the spirit Turgenev finds in womankind. His women are saving angels and evil geniuses alike, their energy of

will and life-ardor yield them the shears of destiny: they are Liza, Elena, Marianna, Varvara, Irina, Marya; but among Turgenev's men heroic virtue is as rare as aggressive vice. Kalomyeitzev, in "Virgin Soil," is despicable; Naum, in "The Inn," is crafty and mean; Vassily Ivanovitch, in "Three Portraits," is perhaps the most accomplished villain one could desire; but these are exceptions, just as Solomin and Bazarov are exceptions. A virgin soil is Russia, and "virgin soil should be broken up, not with the primitive plough that skims along the surface, but with the modern plough which cuts deep."

When Sienkiewicz, in "Without Dogma," speaks of Slavic unproductivity, when it is written that Hamlet is Russia, the words are not wholly without meaning. Turgenev himself was something of a Hamlet. Asked once to give a definition of perfect happiness, he answered: "Laziness without remorse," thus proving himself a true Russian. But if this greatest artist of Russia was himself no Brand, he was too honest a genius to play the Peer Gynt. Always he criticized Russia, yet always he loved her, always he believed in Russia. Note his description of the old couple Fomushka and Fimushka; it is a message of hope in the native strength of Russia's virgin soil. "There are pools on the steppes of that sort: although they have no outlet, they never become covered with scum because they have springs at the bottom. And my old folks have springs—there at the bottom of their hearts—pure, exceedingly pure springs."

Georg Brandes speaks of the harmony between Turgenev's own estimate of a character and his actual delineation of it. This harmony is perhaps in no case so exquisitely exemplified as in "Asya." From her first appearance to her last, the impression which Asya produces has a certain lyrical unity; the author does not change his mind about her

character, nor, on the other hand, does he impose a character upon her. And Asya's irresolute lover shows the same true relation of the artist to his creation. He languishes for happiness. It is offered him in the self-revealing love of Asya. But happiness comes too suddenly; he who languishes for it finds himself disconcerted by its arrival. Like the story-teller in "Andrei Kolosov," like Fustov in "A Hopeless Girl," he too postpones its attainment until the morrow. But "the word to-morrow was invented for irresolute people." "To-morrow I shall be happy! There is no to-morrow for happiness; neither has it any yesterday, and it reckes not of the future; it has the present, and not even a day at that, but a moment."

Like some of the sons and daughters of his fancy, Turgenev himself was a lifelong pilgrim on the road to the happiness with which true attainment blesses man. Nor are his characters alone subject to disenchantment. The lyrical intermezzo "It Is Enough," which he wrote after "On the Eve" and before "Fathers and Children," is a poignant self-revelation of a knight on the battle-field of ideals, who in the midst of the combat asks himself whether it is worth while. The satanic energy of man, which blasts effort, vitiates achievement, and poisons the joy of lofty endeavor, is not pain or misery or death, or even failure. It is a dread of pettiness. "The terrible thing is that there is nothing terrible, that the very substance of life itself is petty, uninteresting, and insipid to beggary." One spends his life-blood in battling for noble ideals, in wrestling with the powers of evil, or one burns his being in devotion to beauty, one holds aloft the torch of artistic truth—*cui bono?* What is the use of enlightening mankind? "Why demonstrate to gnats that they are gnats?" "Man is the child of Nature; but she is the universal mother and has no preferences. . . . She cre-

ates by destroying, and it is a matter of perfect indifference to her what she creates, what she destroys, if only life be not extirpated, if only death does not lose its rights. And therefore she as calmly covers with mould the divine visage of Phidias' Jupiter as she does a plain pebble, and delivers over to be devoured by the condemned moth the most precious lines of Sophocles. . . ." So writes the poet of "A City of Dreadful Night":

"The sense that every struggle brings defeat
Because Fate holds no prize to crown success;
That all the oracles are dumb or cheat
Because they have no secret to express;
That none can pierce the vast black veil uncertain
Because there is no light beyond the curtain;
That all is vanity and nothingness."

"How are we, poor men, poor artists, to come to an agreement with this deaf and dumb force, blind from its birth, which does not even triumph in its victories, but marches, ever marches on ahead, devouring all things?"

Has Turgenev answered this question which most writers do not even ask? He produced several masterpieces after the writing of "It Is Enough." What gave him the inspiration to persist in a task which his reason found so hopeless, so futile? Perhaps life also is futile, but we who treasure the hope that it is not futile—can we dash that hope to bits by putting an end to our lives? Man lives on and hopes. And who knows? Perhaps this determination to live on and hope is bringing the hope itself to realization.

The blind stupidity of nature and of man oppressed the creative soul of Turgenev, yet he kept on to the end—and at the very last he points out the guardian angel of his ideal pilgrimage, the rock of his support and the source of his

inspiration: the indomitable might and beauty of the Russian Word, the Word which for his artist soul was God. This is the last "Poem in Prose," the last page of Turgenev's works. It is entitled "The Russian Language":

"In days of doubt, in days of painful meditation concerning the destinies of my fatherland, thou alone art my prop and my support, O great, mighty, just, and free Russian language! Were it not for thee, how could one fail to fall into despair at the sight of all that goes on at home! But it is impossible to believe that such a language was not bestowed upon a great people!"

LECTURE III

FROM DARKNESS INTO LIGHT: FYODOR DOSTOYEVSKY

IN becoming Europeanized, Muscovy had of course become more nearly civilized; but it had also become more corrupt. The unthinking faith of Holy Russia had given way in the upper classes to a highly sophisticated skepticism. The old Russia had been, and the *mujik* still was, ignorant, superstitious, yet genuine. The nobles and educated classes had a veneer of learning, but the varnish was thin.

Now those among the leaders of Russia who believed that her destiny was in Europe, not in Asia, those who were themselves imbued with the Western spirit, were not blind to the fact that Russia aped instead of emulating Western culture; but they did not on that account regard the European ideals themselves as unworthy of emulation. The trouble with Russia, they said, was that she simply aped Europe, instead of getting her inspiration from the West and seriously attacking her own problems in a modern European manner. Such a champion of world-culture was Turgenev, —indeed, Russia has never had a better prophet of world-culture than the author of "Smoke." Near the close of this novel he puts in the mouth of the seared Potugin a bit of counsel to his countrymen: "Every time it is your lot to undertake any piece of work ask yourself: Are you serving the cause of civilization in the true and strict sense of the word; are you promoting one of the ideals of civilization; have your labors that educating, Europeanizing character

which alone is beneficial and profitable in our day among us? If it is so, go boldly forward; you are on the right path, and your work is a blessing!"

In opposition to the shallow imitators of European manners, in opposition also to the advanced advocates of thorough European culture, there have always been the champions of Holy Russia; men who believe that Russia should remain Russian, spiritually self-complete; men willing to build a cultural Chinese wall around Muscovy. Leaving aside the early opponents of Peter the Great's occidental policy, we find in the nineteenth century the orthodox clergy of Russia opposing the Franco-German influences which made infidels and agnostics of the educated classes; we find apostles of Russian Russia, Slavophiles, Panslavists, voicing their message in literature, urging Russia's self-sufficiency, the superiority of Russian ideals, Russian art, Russian literature and music, Russian morality and religion, laboring for the social and political self-assertion of self-dependent, Slavic Russia.

Self-conscious Panslavism began with Aksakov's rhapsodical praise of the ancient Russian, Slavic virtues, his protest against the tendency to look up to Europe, and his championship of Russia's isolation. Holy Russia has nothing to learn from Europe, the Slavophile said; on the contrary, Europe must and will make pilgrimages to Russia. Above all, this was the Slavophile program: Purge Russia of all European influences. Needless to say, the opponents of this cultural chauvinism resented the idea that they were not good Russians simply because they wanted Russia to share in the ideal treasures of Europe and believed that Russia's cultural star was in the West. Turgenev's firm opposition to this narrow nationalism cost him the friendship, or rather won him the violent hostility, of the Slavo-

phils, of their political leader, Katkov, and of him who may be called their literary apostle, Fyodor Dostoyevsky.

Turgenev's portrayal of shallow, frivolous, culture-needing Russia outraged the uncritical Russianism of Dostoyevsky. Especially was he offended by the novel "Smoke." He hated Germany and despised France. At a meeting in dissolute Baden-Baden, Turgenev told him: "You want to save Russia? There is only one universal and irrefutable way, that of civilization. All attempts to create an independent Russian culture are but folly and pigheadedness." Dostoyevsky thereupon recommended to Turgenev, who was then living abroad, to order a telescope from Paris so that he could study the Russian people conveniently from afar.

The theme of Dostoyevsky's novel "The Possessed," or "The Demons," is the same as that of Turgenev's "Fathers and Children"; and its significance as a means of comparing the art of the two novelists is equaled by its importance in understanding the totally negative attitude which Dostoyevsky took toward the revolutionary propaganda, toward that movement in literature, art, intellectual and social ideals which Turgenev had christened nihilism. Turgenev's book is an honest endeavor to analyze the new type, clearly to delineate it in all its admirable and unlovely strength and weakness, and to contrast it with the old. Dostoyevsky's portrayal is a confessed attack on the new-born demons of destruction. In the new movement of revolt, Dostoyevsky sees the manifestation of cynicism, of embittered, distorted estimates of life; the manifestation of the spirit which kills; a danger, not a promise, for Russia. Human failures, men lacking spiritual orientation, disgruntled men, and emotionally seared women,—these comprise the rank and file of "The Possessed"; although, in justice to Dostoyevsky's art, his portrayal of the pathetically heroic idealist Erkel should

not be forgotten. Dostoyevsky exhibits almost maliciously the credulous curiosity of these folk, eager to be initiated into the red mysteries of revolution.

And the one to initiate them is Pyotr Stepanovitch Verhovensky, a sinister figure, conscienceless, implacable, utterly unscrupulous in his choice of methods. He is completely emancipated from the conventional standards of veracity, honor, and decency; he is willing to sacrifice the happiness or the good name of any man or woman if it serves his purpose. Like an evil genius, he fastens his tentacles on all whom he can use; he binds them to himself in unfaltering loyalty by staining their hands in conspiracies and crimes. This champion of freedom and equality would make supine slaves of all under his charge; he makes them execute his orders in blind submission: such is his idea of organization. He even deceives them about the strength of the movement and its prospects of success; he allows, he encourages them to follow phantoms of delusion. He seems worse than a demagogue; there is occasionally a veritable satanic gleam about the man. He loathes the prospect of reform. He wants things to become worse; the more rotten they become, the more radical will be the ultimate change. "One or two generations of vice are essential now; monstrous, abject vice by which a man is transformed into a loathsome, cruel, egotistic reptile. That's what we need." "We will proclaim destruction!" says this brutal Bazarov of Dostoyevsky. Turgenev's hero has excluded, along with other sentimentalities, filial love; but Bazarov is not maliciously insulting, designedly brutal to his father. Pyotr Stepanovitch is both; the record of his conversations with Stepan Trofimovitch does not increase our affection for the son. In his portrait of the elder Verhovensky, Dostoyevsky caricatured the advocates of "civilization," of Western ideals; the portrait is more prop-

erly a cartoon which Dostoyevsky might have offered to the author of "Smoke." The father is maudlin, theatrical, pathetic, ridiculous, but the son is vicious and morally repellent.

And yet his integrity cannot be doubted: Pyotr Stepanovitch may be a Jesuit in his methods, but his devotion to "the Cause" has the fervor of a Loyola. It is because universal destruction has become for him a mania, an obsession, because it has filled his life entire, that his being contains no room for pity or conscience. And it is this demoniac spirit of modernism, of nihilism, of revolutionism which Dostoyevsky denounces in his novel: a demoniac spirit because it has never felt the glow of sympathy and love, because it is a spirit of destruction, of hatred and denial, because it sets one man against another, because it is the negation of the spirit of Russia's Christ. Verhovensky and his followers must hate; they demand a world which they can hate. Dostoyevsky puts his challenge to "The Possessed" in the mouth of that tragic victim of nihilistic enthusiasm and nihilistic persecution, Shatov: "They'd be the first to be terribly unhappy if Russia could be suddenly reformed, even to suit their own ideas, and become extraordinarily prosperous and happy. They'd have no one to hate then, no one to curse, nothing to find fault with. There is nothing in it but an immense animal hatred for Russia which has eaten into their organism."

And over against this anti-Russian alien spirit, against this foreign-bred heresy of denial and destruction, Dostoyevsky preached the saving power of implicit orthodoxy, the saving grace of pity and charity and love. Not European culture, but faith and piety and Russian simplicity and devotion are saving and will save the world. I quote some

extracts from Dostoyevsky's letters recently published in English: "What has European culture done for Europe? Wherein does she surpass Russia? In Germany everybody can read and write, but everybody is terribly unintelligent, obtuse, stubborn, and devoid of high ideals. . . . In Western Europe the people have lost Christ, and Western Europe is tottering to its fall. . . . Russia is to reveal to the world her own Russian Christ, whom as yet the people know not, and who is rooted in our orthodox faith. . . . Veneration and love of the Russian people's God and its faith—this is fellowship with the people, and only from the people is anything worth while to be expected."

Here you have the quintessence of Pan-Russianism and literary populism—two of the fundamental characteristics of Dostoyevsky's art. Of all the Russian writers, Dostoyevsky is the most professedly, defiantly Russian; hence the difficulty of the Western mind to understand his message, which difficulty has led on the one hand to exaggerated praise of his strange, gloomy genius, and on the other hand to undeserved criticism of it. There is certainly no occidental veneer about Dostoyevsky. He himself could not live outside of Russia; he felt in Europe "like a fish out of water, like a slice cut from the loaf." "If you only knew," he writes in his Letters, "what a deep-drawn revulsion, almost approaching hatred, I have conceived for Western Europe!" Turgenev's genius is also Russian, but Turgenev has more clearly a universal appeal because his vision embraces all humanity. Dostoyevsky's novels are insistently Russian; Russian in their spirituality and their pessimism; even their very immensity and prolixity are Russian; and of the great triad—Turgenev, Tolstoy, Dostoyevsky—the last is the least understood by those outside of Russia. To appreciate

the optimistic gloom which pervades the art of this great Russian genius, some slight acquaintance with his agonized life is indispensable.

Fyodor Dostoyevsky was born in 1821 in a hospital for the Moscow poor. His father, the descendant of what had once been a noble family, was a military surgeon in retirement, and supported his family by serving in the hospital. Their life was simple and their circumstances by no means over-comfortable, but the father had some of the old family pride left in him and the children were educated at home as sons of the nobility. The young Fyodor was not allowed to come in contact with the life of the city, or in any way to associate with the children of the streets. The father spared no effort to retain in his children all the lofty manner of the aristocracy. It was a proud poverty.

The mother died when Fyodor was sixteen, and the following year the father removed to St. Petersburg with his two boys to enter them in the military engineering school. Owing to a curious circumstance, at the entrance examinations the older brother, Michail, who was strong and robust, was rejected as sickly and unfit, while our future writer, who was distinctly weak and delicate, was approved and accepted. The brother Michail went to another school, and Fyodor, who had never before been away from the jealous care of his parents, was now left alone in the confused immensity of the Russian capital. By nature of a melancholy disposition, Dostoyevsky felt like a lost soul. He devoted himself to his military lessons, however, and indeed gave a good account of himself, graduating third in his class of thirty.

But a secret thirst consumed this engineer—a passion for literature which he could not suppress. From his early youth he had been fed on poetry and novels. Pushkin and

Gogol he read, of course, but Fenimore Cooper and Walter Scott were also early favorites. His life in St. Petersburg roused in him a great desire to write. For the first time this son of a decayed nobility came in direct contact with the squalid life of the masses, and he burned to put on paper that which oppressed his young spirit. Like Schiller with his "Robbers," Dostoyevsky wrote his first work in odd moments when he could avoid the surveillance of the military school authorities. In his efforts to evade the eyes of the proctors he was the more successful because his distaste for jolly company and his leaning toward solitude were familiar to his fellows. Soon he had written his first story, "Poor Folk."

About that time—1844—Dostoyevsky's father died. The son promptly resigned his commission in the army, for which he had no liking, and decided to stake all on his success as a writer. His only tangible capital was the manuscript of his story. For a while he dared not submit it to the critics. "I wrote that story with passion, almost with tears," he says. "Had it failed, I should have hanged myself." One of his friends, Grigorovitch, who had had only one thing published, but who knew Nekrasov, one of the great authors and editors of that day, encouraged him to submit his story to Nekrasov for publication. Dostoyevsky spent the next evening with some friends, reading Gogol's "Dead Souls," and returned home about four o'clock in the morning. It was one of the white nights of St. Petersburg. Unable to go to sleep, Dostoyevsky stood by his window musing. Suddenly the bell rang and two men, his friend Grigorovitch and the great poet and editor Nekrasov, rushed into his room, too deeply moved to speak. They had been reading his "Poor Folk" all night, until finally in a burst of enthusiasm they had come to his room to wake him up

and tell him about it; for his story, they said, was more important than sleep. To sensible Anglo-Saxondom this may sound like romantic moonshine, but it is characteristically Russian.

The next day Nekrasov took the manuscript to the famous critic Byelinsky. "A new Gogol has appeared," shouted Nekrasov, entering with the manuscript. "With you Gogols spring up like mushrooms," Byelinsky remarked severely; but he took the manuscript. When Nekrasov returned that same evening, Byelinsky met him with perfect enthusiasm. "Bring him, bring him as soon as you can."

"Poor Folk" is written in the form of a correspondence between Makar Dyevushkin, a shabby copyist-clerk, and the poor, sickly seamstress Barbara Dobroselova. They lodge in adjoining tenements. The shy clerk, who is neither young nor handsome enough to court the seamstress openly, nor sufficiently old and dignified to risk calling on her without arousing comment, is reluctant to accept her invitation to visit her, and remains satisfied with letter-writing. By this literary device Dostoyevsky allows the two characters to reveal themselves and their environment. The impression produced is one of humble pathos rather than of tragic suffering. The petty joys and sorrows of Makar, his concern over his handwriting,— "I write a neat and pleasant hand, but my writing lacks style,"—his admiration for the dime-novelist Rateziaev, whom the more intelligent Barbara naturally despises; his pathetic prodigality in buying her bonbons and bouquets, which she as pathetically condemns while admiring; his own charity toward the poor Goshkov, whose coat is "worse even than my own,"—all these reveal a character pitiable, even lovable in its kindly insignificance. Makar is sentimental, but somehow, with all his shabbiness, sartorial and intellectual, he defies scorn, defies even con-

descension. Surely the portrayal of such a soul is a genuine achievement for a twenty-year-old.

When the wealthy Bwikov, who in time past had wronged Barbara, offers to marry her in order, with one and the same act, to repair the wrong he had done her and to thwart an heir whom he dislikes, she accepts him and proceeds to make elaborate preparations for her trousseau. The news stuns Makar, but he submits to his fate; indeed, he is almost happy at her good fortune and runs her errands from shop to shop, looking at embroideries, laces, silks, and jewelry. She leaves St. Petersburg for Bwikov's country estate, and Makar is left, hoping the floods will stop her carriage and send her back to the city. There is deep sorrow in his soul, but rancor there is none whatever. Barbara has left him to marry the wealthy Bwikov: he plans to buy her a new cloak with his next salary.

This is the story, but what one carries with him is not so much the story itself as its spiritual atmosphere of pathos, compelling pity. Readers of Turgenev will remember Bazarov's father in "Fathers and Children," and his tragic effort to win the love of a son he worships. In Barbara's story of her youth, Dostoyevsky draws a like portrait of a drunkard's adoration for his learned son. Twice a week the old Pokrovski dares to visit his son, always hesitant, almost in trepidation lest his visit displease the stern student. "The old man would make up his mind to enter, and quietly and cautiously open the door. Next he would protrude his head through the chink, and if he saw that his son was not angry but threw him a nod, he would glide noiselessly into the room, take off his scarf, and hang up his hat (the latter perennially in a bad state of repair, full of holes, and with a smashed brim), the whole being done without a sound of any kind. Next the old man would seat himself warily in

a chair and, never removing his eyes from his son's face, follow his every movement as though seeking to gauge Petinka's state of mind. If the son was not in good spirits, the father would make a note of the fact and at once get up, saying that he had 'only called for a minute or two,' that, 'having been out for a long walk, and happening at the moment to be passing,' he had 'looked in for a moment's rest.' Then silently and humbly the old man would resume his hat and depart with a forced smile on his face—the better to bear the disappointment which was seething in his breast, the better to help him not to show it to his son."

"Poor Folk" is clearly the soul-revealing maiden effort of a man who possessed more than any other modern novelist the capacity for infinite pity. There is no indignation in "Poor Folk," there is no abnormal psychology, no panacea. It is as clear an echo from the depths of humble life as is to be heard in all Dostoyevsky. The young writer has chosen his field: let others write of kings and principalities; his song will be the piteous wail of suffering humanity. "One would have but to see what is passing within those great, black, grimy houses of the capital and to penetrate within their walls for one at once to realize what good reason there is for self-depreciation and heart-searching. . . . Let us look at what is passing within those houses. In some dingy corner, perhaps, in some damp kennel which is supposed to be a room, an artisan has just awakened from sleep. . . ." Here is promise of Dostoyevsky's later works.

Needless to say, "Poor Folk" was a brilliant success. The magazines were now open to the author and he published much. He could not duplicate his first success; perhaps he wrote too fast; and if he did, perhaps it was from necessity, for while there was no lack of fame, the poor writer found fame alone an insufficient diet. He was wretchedly paid;

he lacked literally the necessities of life. Besides, he was the sort of man who is ordinarily called shiftless—unless he is a genius, in which case he is styled an idealist. Without any faculty for the practical affairs of life, Dostoyevsky was the easiest person in the world to cheat or defraud and repeatedly lost in foolish ventures what little money he had.

A reckless dreamer, he became interested in the communistic and extreme socialistic views of some Russian students and others in the city. Under the leadership of one Petrashevsky, they studied the communistic theories of Fourier, Proudhon, and Saint-Simon, and planned a radical reconstruction of society. But one April day, Dostoyevsky and thirty others were arrested by the police and imprisoned in the terrible fortress of St. Peter and St. Paul. After ten months of suffering, all of them were condemned to death. At the last moment the sentence of death was changed to eight years' penal servitude in Siberia and many years' subsequent exile. For five years at Omsk he was forced to share the company of thieves and cutthroats, to mingle with the veriest dregs of Russian society,—“murderers by imprudence and murderers by profession, simple thieves, masters in the art of finding money in the pockets of passers-by, or of wiping off no matter what from the table.” One doubts if heaven and hell ever came into such intimate contact on the face of this earth. In his “House of the Dead” Dostoyevsky narrates the story of his own exile under the transparent disguise of a noble, Goriantchikov, sentenced to ten years' hard labor for killing his wife through jealousy. “Such crimes are looked upon as misfortunes which must be treated with pity.”

Unutterable is the squalor of body and soul which Dostoyevsky depicts in this society of human beings buried alive. “In one single room we herded together, more than thirty

men. It was no wonder that we were shut up early. Four hours at least passed before every one was asleep, and until then there was a tumult and uproar of laughter, oaths, rattling of chains, a poisonous vapor of thick smoke; a confusion of shaved heads, stigmatized foreheads, and ragged clothes, disgusting, filthy."

Of all Dostoyevsky's books, "The House of the Dead" is perhaps the least sentimental: there is about this chronicle of prison life in Siberia a certain relentless objectivity, a certain calm massing of details which produces an impression of cumulative force and compels gripping terror, awe. Goriantchikov's companions are no banished heroes. "Those who were not already corrupt when they arrived at the convict establishment became perverted very soon. Brought together in spite of themselves, they were perfect strangers to one another. "The devil wore out three pairs of sandals before he got us together," they would say. Intrigues, calumnies, scandal of all kinds, envy and hatred reigned above everything else. "It would seem that during so many years I ought to have been able to notice some indication, even the most fugitive, of some regret, some moral suffering. I positively saw nothing of the kind."

What is a man of heart and cultivated mind, a man of delicate conscience, to do if destiny has thrown him for ten years' sojourn in this society? What he feels kills him more certainly than the material punishment, for he is daily his own judge. And alongside of him are men who have no conception of their crimes, men who even boast of their atrocious deeds, and creatures who enjoy themselves. Dostoyevsky has sketched this latter type in a way to make us ashamed of our humanity. There is the man who has been worked to death to enrich his master, whose whole life has been one sorry round of hungry stupidity. Here in

prison his work-hours are shorter, his food is better, and "the society one meets in the convict prison—is that to be counted for nothing? The convicts are clever, wide-awake people who are up to everything. The new arrival can scarcely conceal the admiration he feels for his companions in labor. He has seen nothing like it before, and he will consider himself in the best company possible."

But keener than the misery of squalid labor, deeper than the disgust, physical and moral, with one's environment, more deadening than all to Dostoyevsky was "the poignant and terrible suffering of never being alone even for one minute during ten years. Working under escort in the barracks together with two hundred 'companions'; never alone, never!"

The years pass one after another. "Man is a pliable animal," he says; "that would be perhaps the best definition that could be given of him." The years roll on, and "the winter so long, long prayed for is come, come at last." But while the prisoner has believed himself the same day by day, when the hour of departure comes there comes also the realization of the irremediable change which has affected his whole being. "One day I saw a prisoner, who had undergone his punishment, take leave of his comrades. He had had twenty years' hard labor. More than one convict remembered seeing him arrive, quite young, careless, thinking neither of his crime nor of his punishment. He was now an old man with gray hairs, with a sad and morose countenance. He walked in silence through our six barracks. When he entered each of them he prayed before the holy image, made a deep bow to his former companions, and begged them not to keep a bad recollection of him."

After his years of Siberian exile, Dostoyevsky, a noble, was put in the army as a private, and suffered indignities

for another five years before he regained his freedom. He returned to Russia prematurely old, a physical wreck; his nervous system shattered; an invalid, subject to epileptic fits due to a barbarous punishment inflicted on him during his exile. One should expect to find him a sworn enemy of Holy Russia. Not so Dostoyevsky. For this is the marvel: he went to Siberia a pessimist weary of life; he returned an optimist with the firmest belief in the inherent goodness of human nature, an idealist who believed that even his own terrible sentence had been a real good because it had opened his eyes to the wisdom and goodness of life, and who wrote the Czar a public letter of thanks for having exiled him; an optimist, not in spite of his sufferings, but because of them. What could be the meaning of this strange Russian paradox? Where does Dostoyevsky find his reasons for looking at life through such bright glasses?

Dostoyevsky thanks Siberia for saving his soul by revealing to him the essential goodness of human nature. But what goodness did he find in "The House of the Dead"? In this graveyard of souls buried alive are there any gleams of humanity? The sympathetic eye alone may occasionally discover the half-stifled but not dead capacity to respond to pity and Christian love. We find there Ali, the romantic child of Daghestan, a yataghan-wielder on general principles of fraternal obedience, and a dreamy, nostalgic soul. Goriantchikov teaches him Russian, using the New Testament, the only book not forbidden in the prison. When they reach the Sermon on the Mount the face of the highway robber lights up. "'Forgive those that hate you!' Ah, how divinely he speaks!"

Petrov is a man who "will assassinate any one for twenty-five kopeks simply to get himself a pint of vodka. On any

other occasion he will disdain hundreds and thousands of rubles." He steals Goriantchikov's Bible, which he sells for drink. And yet in the bath scene—which one wishes to quote entire in all its Dantesque gloom, so worthy of the admiration which it evoked in Turgenev—in the bath scene Petrov certainly shows himself human. Isaiah Fomitch's ambition to saturate himself with steam and outdo all others in heat endurance; the Christmas theatrical performance with its happy actors and its convict audience, grateful to the non-commissioned officers for their condescension in attending their show; and the Old Believer grandfather praying for the Orthodox Christians—these are all flashes of glimmering humanity and possible goodness which may atone for all the sad trickery displayed in the hospital—atone even for the unspeakable depths of moral degradation revealed in the episode, "The Husband of Akoulka."

A wounded, half-dead steppe eagle, brought to the prison camp by a convict, sullenly rejects any food that is offered him, waiting for death, refusing to be reconciled. He is ignored for two months, but at last he evokes something in the souls of this society of cutthroats.

"Let him die, but let him not die in prison," said the prisoners.

"He is not like us; he's a bird, and we're human beings."

"They threw him from the rampart on to the steppe. It was just at the end of the autumn, a gray, cold day. The wind whistled on the bare steppe and went groaning through the yellow, dried-up grass. The eagle made off directly, flapping his wounded wing as if in a hurry to quit us and get himself a shelter from our piercing eyes. The convicts watched him intently as he went along with his head just above the grass.

" 'Do you see him, hey?' said one very pensively.

" 'He doesn't look round,' said another; 'he hasn't looked behind once.'

" 'Did you happen to fancy he'd come back to thank us?' said a third.

" 'Sure enough, he's free; he feels it. It's *freedom*.'

" 'Yes, freedom.'

" 'You won't see him any more, pals.' "

And just as under the light of a genuine lofty emotion gleams of real humanity issue from the caverns of murderous crime, so even the mere promise of a generous love is sufficient to work miracles in the embittered and besotted depths of a lost soul. In "The Gentle Maiden," a grim money-lender, crushed by the contempt of others, an alien among his fellow-men, is exalted and transfigured by love. That he cannot adapt himself to his new state, that he ends in unwillingly causing the death of the woman he loves, is, after all, irrelevant. The fundamental fact remains: as he stands meditating beside the dead body of his gently proud wife, we know that to the end of his days he will never be happy again, but we know also that never again can he be the frozen soul he was before her misery had roused his pity and saved him from spiritual torpor.

The entire theme of that agonizing book, "The Idiot,"—agonizing in its unwieldy prolixity, agonizing in its insistence on morbid analysis of character,—what is its fundamental theme but precisely this: the depicting of a man who, lacking all except the fountain of Christian charity, compels men to yield to him, to obey, even to worship him in spite of his stupidity and repulsiveness? In the portrait of Prince Myshkin, Dostoyevsky seems consciously to have set himself to point out "the one thing needful." Myshkin is an epileptic; his inability to maintain his balance socially invites

the scorn of those with whom he comes in contact. He is the topic of pleasantries; intelligent, *comme il faut* ladies and gentlemen find his presence irritating and distasteful; he is freely insulted; he is even slapped in the face. But his very simplicity, the generous nature of his stupidity disarms hatred: one scorns him for not resenting an insult, but in time the outraged epileptic hero, who weeps instead of fighting duels, obtains his apologies freely. "Oh, how ashamed you will be of what you have done!" he exclaims in a breaking voice after Tanya, mad with rage, has given him a violent slap in the face. And he proves a good prophet. The idiot's docility, his simple-hearted sympathy breaks through walls of opposition which resist all the able arguments and fine rhetoric of cleverer men. He conquers the hearts of those whose intellects despise his own. "Where there is love, there is no need of wisdom."

Aglaia, who loves him in spite of herself, sums it up in genuine Dostoyevsky fashion: "I consider you the most honest and truthful of men, more honest and truthful than any one; and if they do say that your mind—that is, that you're sometimes afflicted in your mind, it's unjust. I made up my mind about that, and disputed with others, because, though you really are mentally affected (you won't be angry at that, of course; I'm speaking from a higher point of view), yet the mind that matters is better in you than in any of them. It's something, in fact, that they have never dreamed of. For there are two sorts of mind: one that matters and one that doesn't matter."

Nor is it only in lofty natures like Aglaia's that Myshkin produces this profound impression. This idiot who lacks the manner of the cultivated parlor sage, or anything imperious or impressive, this man who has epileptic fits, is capable of evoking in the miserable, shameless, venal Na-

stasya Filippovna a passion which maddens and destroys her, but a passion also which lifts her to a higher spiritual plane: she loves him too deeply to allow him to link his life to such a one as herself. So does generosity beget generosity. Love is the sovereign conqueror, says Dostoyevsky; no barrier of evil can withstand its gentle pressure. Pity and love open freely the most hopelessly locked hearts, open them to welcome and to be welcomed into the hearts of others. "In scattering the seed, scattering your 'charity,' your kind deeds, you are giving away in one form or another part of your personality, and taking into yourself part of another; you are in mutual communion with one another."

To understand adequately Dostoyevsky's philosophy of life, however, one must read his masterpiece, "Crime and Punishment." This book, published in 1866, immediately took all Russia, and later all Europe, by storm. No novel of Dostoyevsky's has achieved such a success. And, on the whole, there can be no doubt that it manifests his genius at its best. While his last unfinished novel, "The Brothers Karamazov," is a more colossal book, in its delineation of human character a work more typical of his manner, and in its scrutiny of the deeper reaches of human iniquity a more harrowing and perhaps a stronger book than "Crime and Punishment," it contains likewise some of the most exasperating examples of the unwieldiness, the prolixity, and the morbid psychiatry which poison so much of Dostoyevsky's art. Siberian tortures made Dostoyevsky an epileptic; the poor man had frequent fits all the rest of his life, and he took a morbid interest in his malady. He described all his symptoms to doctors, and naturally had an inquiring sympathy for all manner of nervous sufferers and lunatics. Holy Russia had thrown him in strange company, and the autobiographical leaning which is apparent

throughout his works led him to introduce into his novels the products of that unholy trinity of Russian life: the prison, the insane asylum, and the house of prostitution.

In "The Brothers Karamazov" we find ourselves in the darkest midnight of spiritual confusion and moral depravity. The plot of this eight-hundred-page novel turns on the murderous hatred between Fyodor Karamazov and his son Mitya, fanned by the passion, bestial in the father, tragic in the son, for the same Grushenka, a passion resulting in the death of the father and the consequent trial and conviction of the son. This is our theme. It is significant, too, that the main characters in this tragedy of human iniquity are a gallery of bodily, mental, and moral invalids; not one of them is healthy and normal. It is an immense book; it is more than a novel, it reminds one of "Les Misérables"; philosophical and religious digressions, while detracting from its artistic perfection, heighten its value as a human document, as in the life and thought of Elder Zossima and the conception of "The Grand Inquisitor," to mention only two. Through hundreds of pages Dostoyevsky pursues the souls of his characters, racking, probing, dissecting, an uncanny seer in a depressing world.

In point of morbid character analysis, "The Brothers Karamazov" is easily Dostoyevsky's masterwork—indeed, the masterwork of Russian literature. The portrait of Alyosha is an example of the ideal life as Dostoyevsky saw it, an example for which we shall hunt in vain through "Crime and Punishment"; while in the characters of the other three Karamazovs Dostoyevsky has sounded lower depths of human depravity than are disclosed in "Crime and Punishment." Yet one doubts if this straining of the extremes of human nature has yielded a book either of more compelling artistry or more profound philosophy.

Needless to say, the Russian masters do not lean to polite evasions in describing the frailties of man. Personally I should resent an expurgated Shakespeare as I should resent an expurgated Bible; it is not prudishness, therefore, which motivates my brevity in dealing with "The Brothers Karamazov." Turgenev, the purest of all the genuine masters of the novel, by no means turned his back on the seamy side of life. I doubt if in all Dostoyevsky, with his murderers and libertines and drunkards and lunatics and epileptics, there is to be found a character embodying the quintessentially diabolical in human nature to match Turgenev's Marya in "Spring Freshets," yet it would be quite possible to read Turgenev's "Spring Freshets" aloud from beginning to end before the most conventional audience. For Turgenev never crosses the barrier which separates the tragically evil from the repulsive.

In saying this I am not necessarily condemning Dostoyevsky. Of all the Russian masters, he is by all odds the strangest. He is an undoubted master, but one must cultivate a taste for his art. Now one of the objects of these lectures—perhaps the main object—is to stir interest in Russian literature, and I fear that if one begins the study of Dostoyevsky with "The Brothers Karamazov," one may go no further; while if one begins with "Crime and Punishment," one may perhaps be able to read even "The Brothers Karamazov." Aside from this, from the point of view of sheer literary art, in its construction, technical balance and unity, and spiritual artistry, "Crime and Punishment" is Dostoyevsky's best novel.

After what has just been said, it should be quite clear that if Dostoyevsky can look at life through bright glasses, he certainly does not limit his vision to the bright spots in life. Shame, degradation, squalid misery, and moral stench com-

prise his materials; and yet, in a manner half ghastly, half sublime, he sees and insists that we see the image of God in all this apparently diabolical creation. The hillside is not dew-pearled, as in Browning's "Pippa Passes." No larks are on the wing in Dostoyevsky, and yet the final refrain is the same:

"God's in his heaven,
All's right with the world."

The hero of "Crime and Punishment" is a Russian student by the name of Raskolnikov. Melancholy, sensitive, kind and charitable to a fault, he lives in a dirty St. Petersburg hovel, in a room as big and as dismal as a coffin. His mother, a widow, living with his sister Dunia on a pension of a few rubles a year, still manages to scrape together some money for her son, whom they both believe to be making a success at the university. As a matter of fact, Raskolnikov has been obliged to leave the university for lack of funds, and, unable to find work and almost starved, has become hopelessly despondent. His whole outlook upon life is gloomy; he hates existence, and his despair is the deeper because he feels within himself gifts, intellectual and moral, which could benefit the world not a little if only a chance were given him to exercise them. This young man with fine sensibilities and unusual—indeed, keen—intelligence, is compelled because of his misery to associate with men who disgust him, to mix with the dregs of society, to soil his being with the dirt and soot and stench of the dismal city. To raise money on which to live he pawns, first, a gold ring which his sister has given him, and, later, his dead father's watch, to an old woman who thrives on poor students, a woman who squeezes out the last penny from penniless men.

And behold how the first seed of crime is sown in this

despondent, melancholy soul; how this sensitive, kind, generous student begins to harbor the dread idea. Just as Raskolnikov is drinking the tea he has bought with the old woman's money, he hears two other men discussing her. One of them says: "Here is a silly, flint-hearted, evil-minded, sulky old woman, necessary to no one—on the contrary, pernicious to all—who does not know herself why she lives. . . . A dozen families might be saved from hunger, want, ruin, crime, and misery—and all with her money! Kill her, I say; take it from her and dedicate it to the service of humanity and to the general good. What is your opinion? Shall not one little crime be effaced and atoned for by a thousand good deeds? For one useless life, a thousand lives saved from decay and death? One death, and a hundred beings restored to existence? There is calculation for you. What in proportion is the life of this miserable old hag? No more than the life of a flea, a beetle; nay, not even that, for she is pernicious. . . . She preys on other lives. . . ."

These words haunt the poor student: the old woman is nothing more than a vermin; she ought to be done away with. But kill her? How? He has no money with which to buy a weapon; he has only a hatchet at his disposal. Yet—kill an old woman with a hatchet? The idea is esthetically no less than morally repulsive; still, he cannot on that account get rid of it. He is feverish, dizzy with hunger, but his own misery cannot make him decide to commit the murder.

One already anticipates that Dostoyevsky is to have a murderer for his hero. But that is not enough: his heroine is a prostitute. Which is no shocking matter, after all, considering that the Christ whom Dostoyevsky worshiped did not scorn publicans and fallen women. The penniless student comes in contact with an old drunkard's family in

which the eldest daughter has been forced to become a street-walker for the sake of saving her own father's and her stepmother's children from starvation. Here is a girl who has sacrificed herself, soiled her pure being for the sake of a drunken sot father and a consumptive stepmother's children. Raskolnikov's moral nature feels no revulsion. He pities the girl, but scorn her he cannot. A time comes when he kneels before her: "I do not bow to you personally," he says, "but to suffering humanity in your person."

At his room he receives a pathetic letter from his mother, apprising him that his own beloved sister Dunia has consented to marry an undesirable man in order to obtain money with which to help him—Raskolnikov—through the university. The news compels his decision. He would do anything rather than let his sister wreck her life's happiness for the sake of money. If Dunia marries without love, she would be no different from the miserable drunkard's daughter, even though she remain respectable. Why should he allow his sister to kill her virgin soul for his sake? He would rather destroy the wicked, useless money-lender. Killing an old hag, he reasons, would be far less of a crime than condemning a young girl to an entire life of wretchedness.

By the merest chance he learns that at a certain hour the old money-lender will be alone in her flat—a most unusual thing for the suspicious woman. Raskolnikov decides not to miss his one opportunity. He goes to her rooms and kills her. Unfortunately, however, the money-lender's sister, Elizabeth, a good, pious woman, enters the fatal room just as the assassin is about to leave it, and the one premeditated and self-justified murder is followed by another murder, wholly unpremeditated, which shocks the sensitive student as much as the former had satisfied him. I will not urge you

through the sorry details of the tragedy. The fact is that this gifted, generous student has become overnight an atrocious murderer, the author of a crime which shocks even St. Petersburg and causes many arrests.

Raskolnikov manages to escape inquiry; he has himself, and only himself, to fear. But what a burden it is! With his unspeakable genius for horror, Dostoyevsky has portrayed the torments of this man who imagines himself suspected, the visions of agony, the ghastly dreams and hallucinations that torture this soul on the brink of spiritual disintegration, the delirium which gives him no peace, and the crafty cunning of his criminally insane brain, fighting a losing battle with itself, yet defying the whole world. His crime has brought him only suffering; it weighs upon him; it becomes an obsession, a fixed idea, which pursues him every minute of his life. Through hundreds of pages we follow the horrors of this man whom an unkind destiny and an elastic conscience have hurled into the depths of crime.

Finally Dostoyevsky leads us to an intensely dramatic situation. The student-murderer, who has committed a crime to save his mother and sister from servitude and dishonor, finds a true fellow-sufferer in the miserable daughter of the sentimental drunkard. He feels that her anguish must be similar to his, for in both cases a noble soul has been dragged into the mire. To Sonia, the street-walker, the student-assassin goes and confesses the crime, the secret which he has jealously concealed from his closest friend and from his family.

It is a literal marvel of genius, that description where the street-walker Sonia reads to the student-murderer Raskolnikov the chapter from the Bible about the resurrection of Lazarus. Lazarus, dead in the grave four days, was brought to life. There is hope, then, for the student-assas-

sin. But he must confess his crime; he must undergo the suffering it involves. That alone—only the truth—will purge his heart and soul and give him back peace in life. At first Raskolnikov would rather die than confess. “What crime?” he tells his sister, when she also has heard about it. “Is it a crime to have killed some vile and noisome vermin . . . a vampire living on the life of the poor? Murders of that kind ought to *make up* for many a crime!”

But his own life-agony compels him to do what his distorted logic refuses. Is it really repentance, is it fear, is it change of mind and faint-heartedness which lead the murderer to confess his crime? Or is it not perhaps the intolerable state in which he finds himself, the horror of the fixed idea which gives him no peace? He has confessed, and is sentenced to long years of exile and hard labor in Siberia. Sonia accompanies him there, and becomes a sister of mercy and grace to the wretched prisoners in that sepulcher of the living.

For a long time Raskolnikov is in despair. His life has no aim. How is it that in that gloomy, diseased spirit there finally gleams again the light of hope and happiness and new-born life? How is it that the new history commences: the story of the gradual rebirth of a man, of his slow, progressive regeneration and change from one world to another? What power accomplishes this miracle? Dostoyevsky answers: the power of suffering to purge the human heart, and the wondrous magic of charity and love.

These are the great doctrines, the main ideas which underlie all of Dostoyevsky's writings, which inspire his work, which make him an optimist in spite of the fact that few men have delved more deeply into the darkness, the slime, and the misery of life. In the first place, Dostoyevsky declares,—and that is what makes him essentially an

optimist,—in every life, no matter how evil and disgusting, no matter how hopeless to the superficial spectator, there is a germ of goodness, and therefore the possibility of regeneration, of purity and virtue. Go through the whole list of characters in his novels; you can scarcely find a single one that does not at times show the gleam of kindness, of virtue and goodness and light. Aye, even of that old beast Fyodor Karamazov Dostoyevsky writes: "People, even the wicked, are much more naïve and simple-hearted than we suppose." Man is not essentially bad, and even when he sinks in the mire of vice there is still hope. There is hope, but only through suffering. Voluntary suffering, willing expiation—this is the only cure for a shattered and diseased soul. And this is the second great idea in Dostoyevsky's mind, which led him, on his return from Siberia, instead of complaining of his sufferings, publicly to thank the Czar for sending him there! The third idea is that the power of sympathy, of charity and love can work miracles in any human heart, no matter how evil and degraded it may appear. "What is hell?" Father Zossima asks in "The Brothers Karamazov," and answers: "The suffering of being unable to love." It was suffering and sympathy and love which changed the student-murderer's outlook upon life until at the end he could exclaim: "'What are now all the torments of the past?' All—even his sin and sentence and exile—appeared to him . . . as if they had not occurred, or were swept away. . . . Life, full, real, earnest life, was coming and had driven away his thoughts. Seven years—only seven years! They seemed now as seven days. . . . A new life is not given for nothing: it has to be paid for dearly, and only acquired by much patience and suffering, and great future efforts. . . ."

All his life Dostoyevsky taught these ideas, and this

Christian gospel of love and atonement is the dominant note in his novels. He was a Russian mystic with the Russian immense capacity for suffering and enduring, and with a Russian's defiant orthodoxy. The least profound study of Dostoyevsky's art, from the purely literary point of view, reveals his deficiencies. So intent is he on uttering his gospel in his novels that he neglects the artistic perfection of his work. He is prolix, he digresses to exasperation, he is careless alike in matters of style and in plot-construction; the most heart-breaking realist, he is also capable of maudlin sentimentality and reckless romanticism, and even of the cheapest sort of melodrama. Those who worship at his altars remind us that the prophet was poor, that he had to turn out as much work as possible to buy bread for his own and his brother's families, and was therefore not always able to revise and polish what he wrote. The fact remains, however, that his novels do show sadly the need of the blue pencil.

If his art is more profound than Gogol's, it is unrelieved by that kindly gleam of humor which makes "Dead Souls" immortal. He is more colossal than Turgenev, but not on that account a greater giant. He lacks alike Turgenev's faultless art and the penetrating, thousand-eyed vision of Tolstoy. All his life he measured himself with these two Titans, and his failure to come up to their level must have embittered his last years. That he *did not* come up to their level only a blind devotee of Dostoyevsky can deny. One has only to compare "The Possessed" with "Fathers and Children" and "Virgin Soil," or "The Idiot" and "The Brothers Karamazov" with "Anna Karenin," or "Poor Folk" with "Memoirs of a Sportsman," or "The Gambler" with "Smoke," to realize the gap which separates Dostoyevsky from his two contemporaries, a wide gap in spite of Dosto-

evsky's uncanny genius for sounding the depths of the human soul.

Dostoyevsky lacked the knightly nobility of spirit. He had to fight with hunger, a fight which does not always show the warrior at his best. The recent publication of his letters has produced in the fastidious *Spectator* "a disagreeable surprise." They reveal him, we read, as "a rather meanly egotistical nature, disagreeable, complaining, fault-finding, apparently without a trace of nobility. His perpetual topic is money. In fact, altogether, the book is of a sort to make one pray that the correspondence of Shakespeare is not lurking in some Jacobean cupboard, ready to spring upon a dismayed and disillusioned world." Against this clever but ungenerous estimate of a martyred spirit, behold Prince Kropotkin's no less candid but more illuminating, because more sympathetic, appreciation: "One pardons Dostoyevsky everything because when he speaks of the forgotten children of our town civilization he becomes truly great through his wide, infinite love of mankind—of man even in his worst manifestations. Through his love of those drunkards, beggars, petty thieves, whom we usually pass by without even bestowing on them a pitying glance; through his power of discovering what is human and often great in the lowest-sunken being; through the love which he inspires in us even for the least interesting types of mankind, even for those who will never make an effort to get out of the low and miserable position into which life has thrown them—through this faculty, Dostoyevsky has certainly won a unique position among the writers of modern times; and he will be read, not for the artistic finish of his writings, but for the good thoughts that are scattered through them, for their real reproduction of slum life in the great cities, and for the

infinite sympathy which a being like Sonia can inspire in the reader."

In the darkness and poverty which surrounded him, in the misery which pursued him to the grave, Dostoyevsky could see the gleam of a new life, a greater, purer life for Russia, a life whose foundation was human brotherhood, whose law was the law of charity and love. And when, in 1881, at the age of sixty, he finally collapsed under the unendurable strain of existence, all Russia felt the loss of a man she needed. It was a nation-wide sorrow. Forty thousand Russians followed Dostoyevsky's body to the grave—a procession of grief which extended for miles. And in Yasnaya Polyana, Count Tolstoy, who had not been personally acquainted with the dead novelist, but who nevertheless had been touched by his art and his ideas, experienced a genuine sense of bereavement. "I never saw the man," Tolstoy wrote, "and never had any direct relations with him, yet suddenly when he died I understood that he was the nearest and dearest and most necessary of men to me. Everything that he did was of the kind that the more he did it, the better I felt it was for men. All at once I read that he is dead, and a prop has fallen from me."

In the small company of nineteenth-century immortals, next to Russia's master-artist, Turgenev, next to the bravest apostle of an exacting gospel, Lyof Tolstoy, the world must reckon this long-suffering spokesman of Russia's millions, who endured much and yet saw in the dark shadows of life the light of human goodness; and the world must overlook the errors of the weak man and honor Fyodor Dostoyevsky.

LECTURE IV

COUNT TOLSTOY THE NOVELIST

A TRANSLATOR of Turgenev, writing some thirty-five or forty years ago, mentioned several Russian authors of that day, among them Tolstoy, whom he described as "a writer of military stories." He suggested that perhaps some selections from Tolstoy's works might be translated into English, but that his novels in their entirety would not appeal to the English-speaking world. Yet Tolstoy's works have been translated into English, not once, but several times over, and for the last twenty-five years have made a deeper impression on mankind than the works of any of his contemporaries, Ibsen scarcely excepted. His estate, Yasnaya Polyana, was the Mecca of literary pilgrims. Tolstoy himself, "the grand *mujik*," as he has been called, stood somehow over and above our strenuous civilization—a prophet, a seer, a judge, whom mankind venerated even while criticizing. Dostoyevsky's novels barely kept the wolf from his door; his death did not impress the English-speaking world sufficiently to evoke even a notice in the English press. But the demand for Count Tolstoy's novels led a foreign publisher to offer him one million rubles for his copyrights; and when Tolstoy was dying at Astapovo no item of news was considered more important throughout the world. What can account for such astonishing influence?

Is it, perhaps, because human nature is enamoured of the unusual? The conventional, the mediocre produces little impression on us, nor do we feel drawn toward the perfectly

respectable; but the original personality is always sure to compel our attention, because of our normal demand for abnormal experiences. Mankind has repeatedly lost its heart to those who have defied and denounced it, who have dared boldly to deny its dominant conventions and principles of life. The sophisticated day of Athenian culture and Corinthian luxury, when the beauty-loving Hellenic soul sipped at superfine delights and weighed in delicate balance the slightest shades of bodily and mental pleasure, was just the right day for a Diogenes. The cynic of Sinope came to the Greek children of fashion and convention, and he spat at their artificial life. They vied with each other in gorgeous living and festivity; Diogenes fared on garlic and lived in the proverbial tub. They spent their life in a mad pursuit after social distinction and yielded admiration to success and power; Diogenes scorned all social honor as empty, and found his satisfaction in his own self-complete life. And yet few men in Greece commanded such respect as Diogenes. Even so the rich, sensuous Florentines turned to the scathing sermons of Savonarola. The formal, heartlessly intellectual eighteenth century was similarly shocked and conquered by Jean Jacques Rousseau's sentimental plea for a return to nature; and Rousseau's gospel was the more compelling precisely because it was the absolute negation of all conventional ideals. In all these cases the daring challenge of the prophet of the simple or austere or natural life had resistless power; for the world's ideal of life is like a pendulum and constantly oscillates between extremes.

This reflection may perhaps help us to appreciate the significance of Tolstoy's tremendous success as a writer and his profound influence as a prophet. At first sight the power and influence of this modern Diogenes are hard to understand. How is it possible for a man to command such uni-

versal attention when he negates the basic principles of our modern life? In an age of the most extreme universal struggle for self-advancement and conquest, Tolstoy preaches non-resistance; in an age whose great distinction is that of having worked the greatest wonders in the field of material achievement, he scorns material progress; in an age of the division of labor, he considers no man moral unless he produces for himself the necessities of life. Yet in spite of it all, he draws millions to himself. Not in spite of it all, some may say, but precisely because of it: Tolstoy appeals to us as he does just because he is so—one might almost say—perverse! Or again, perhaps because he is so genuinely in earnest, so human, and therefore such a puzzle.

When we come to examine Tolstoy's art, Tolstoy's gospel, and when we look into his life, we do feel puzzled. It is indeed not easy for us to understand his lifelong struggle with the problem of the meaning and worth of human existence. To us whose souls increase from year to year at so much per centum, and whose troubles and ideals are alike sordid, Tolstoy's spiritual trials and agonies seem abnormal, unreal,—so unreal that many of us even go so far as to doubt the sincerity of this Russian count who put on the peasant's blouse and went to the harvest fields to plow side by side with his one-time serfs. Tolstoy's writings are not the product of complacent leisure. Like Turgenev, like Dostoyevsky, Tolstoy also records in his works his own struggle with the problem of life. If his solution of life's problem strikes us as bold, we shall find the actual decisions he took in his own life much bolder,—and if they puzzle us, who shall say that Tolstoy is to blame? "When a book and a head strike against each other, and a hollow sound ensues, is the trouble always in the book?"

Lyof Nikolayevitch Tolstoy, like Turgenev, came from

the cream of society. Like Turgenev's ancestry, his also went back to the court of Peter the Great. Tolstoy's own father, Nikolai, had been prominent in Russian military history; his mother was born Princess Maria Volkonsky, and there are good reasons for believing that Tolstoy's own parents were in his mind when he told the romance of Nikolai Rostov and the Princess Maria Bolkonsky in "War and Peace." From the very start young Lyof was an uncommon boy. Keen mentally, but not over-diligent; suspicious, yet generous; morbid, with a certain inborn melancholy, and nevertheless a recklessly joyous and even mischievous youth, he must have been a boy of a thousand questions, the despair of nurses and tutors. Certainly he tells us as much in his autobiographic sketches, "Childhood," "Boyhood," and "Youth." Already, at the age of fifteen, he showed skeptical tendencies. The problems of life and death and the meaning of human existence troubled this unquiet spirit. He went to the University of Kazan, and, trying to do something unusual, entered the department of Oriental languages.

He was strong physically. When, in "Anna Karenin," he describes the physique of Konstantin Levin, we can well imagine the prototype. A vigorous body and a restless mind,—that was Tolstoy at the easy-going University of Kazan, the Mecca at that time of the gilded Russian youth with full purses and empty heads. Tolstoy found only tedium in the coarse jollity of his fellows. He did little work, but his soul was devoured with countless longings, taking the shape now of some ideal of perfect womanhood, now of some unrealized Utopia.

From the department of Oriental languages he changed to the department of law, but found it no less futile. He felt a sort of unreality in all academic scholarship. His pro-

fessors were fossils; they did not answer, they were not even interested in the life-and-death problems which engrossed him. They shut their eyes to him and his actual human questions, and they sing-songed their lectures on what happened a thousand years ago. And his fellow-students? What seekers after truth were these rakes who squandered their time and substance in indolence and revel and debauch? What spiritual light could be looked for from these card-fiends and midnight wanderers? The university disgusted Tolstoy, and he left it without bothering about his diploma.

The young count returned to his estate and for a while devoted his time to improving the miserable condition of his serfs. The aspirations of nineteen-year-old Prince Nekhludov, described in "A Russian Proprietor," are doubtless transcriptions from Tolstoy's own life. He had read with the greatest enthusiasm the twenty volumes of Jean Jacques Rousseau, wore a medallion with Rousseau's picture around his neck, and planned to lead a life close to nature. But, like Nekhludov, his altruistic dreams for his estate and serfs were unaccompanied by any knowledge of agricultural matters, and, as his enterprise failed, this sentimental pupil of Rousseau began imitating his master's manner of life instead of his teachings. Gipsy dancers and revelers, gamblers and roisterers became his daily company. He who had longed to become a saint turned a beast. Months passed in this way,—in riotous living which later necessitated the sale of the house in which he had been born to pay his gambling debts. The "Recollections of a Billiard-Marker" is a pithy record of the gambling Tolstoy's psychology: one can readily imagine Tolstoy anticipating for himself precisely such a contemptible end as Prince Nekhludov's in the "Recollections." But with the same objectivity with which Tolstoy paints his moral degradation and ignominy, does he deline-

ate also the deeper yearnings after nobility which stirred in his soul disgust for his riotous living.

Once more disenchanted, now with himself, he entered the army and went to the wild Caucasian country. Here in the untamed, unsophisticated life of nature he sought peace; and his Caucasian life and dreams are well reflected in his story "The Cossacks."

The hero, Dmitri Olyenin, is Tolstoy himself. Olyenin is a Moscow society young man who has squandered half of his patrimony, has never chosen any career or done anything. And yet he is not lacking in virtue so much as he is lacking in spiritual orientation. He feels in himself the fresh spontaneity of youth, and yet does not know in what channel of activity to invest it. His jolly life yields him no happiness; his long nights do not bring him contentment on the morrow. He craves contentment and happiness, but they elude him. "Hitherto the only object of his affection had been himself, and this was inevitable because he expected from himself nothing but what was good, and he had not as yet lost his illusions about himself." The love of others he has compelled, but his own heart is innocent of love's dominion. "Why have I never yet fallen in love?" he asks himself as his sleigh flies southward, away from Moscow's snows and sordid gaiety, flies southward toward the gleaming sun and winding Terek and smoking *auls* and the Cossacks and Tartars of the wild Caucasian mountainland.

And what a rare world is the world of these wild folk! Tolstoy's tale "A Prisoner of the Caucasus" possesses exquisite simplicity and directness, but there is more elemental intensity, more pervading atmosphere in "The Cossacks." Turgenev, in a burst of enthusiasm, called the story of Olyenin Russia's best novel. It reminds one of "Taras Bulba"; there is something of Gogol's savage magnificence

in the picture of old Uncle Yeroshka. This Terek land is a land in which money counts a good deal, but *jigit* bravery a good deal more. The Caucasian Cossack has no mean estimate of his own manner of life; "he regards himself as having attained the highest degree of culture, looks on the Cossack as alone worthy of the name of man, and affects to despise every one else." The former young lion of Moscow drawing-rooms finds himself in a land in which ragged and carelessly dressed, but richly armed bravos treat him, a prince and a wealthy serf-owner, with kind condescension, and where an untutored rustic belle, whose costume consists of precisely one garment, vouchsafes his elegance not one single glance.

"The Cossacks" is a novel with a Rousseauian theme. Tolstoy shows the transformation wrought in Olyenin's soul by the simple, elemental, nobly savage life of the Caucasian folk. Rousseau himself could not have drawn more magnificently the portrait of the man living close to nature: "Olyenin in appearance was an entirely different man. Instead of smoothly shaven cheeks, he wore a young mustache and a beard. Instead of the pale, unhealthy complexion of one whose nights are spent in dissipation, he showed a fresh and ruddy tan over his cheeks, forehead, and ears. Instead of a perfectly new black coat, he wore a dirty white *cherkeska* with wide lapels and carried a rifle. . . . His whole being breathed of health, happiness, and satisfaction."

But it is not enough for the Moscow-bred *junker* to don a Cossack costume in order to find happiness and meaning in life. The inner life of the Cossack is one of animal simplicity. When the intrepid Lukashka kills a Chechenetz, his conscience does not bother him in the slightest: they may kill him, he may kill them—it is part of life. Killing an enemy, stealing a horse, rioting, feasting and drinking, and

having luck, and excelling in all—these comprise Lukashka's life, these make him famous. Maryanna the virgin frankly admires this dissolute galliard. And Uncle Yeroshka's philosophy of life is easily expounded: "Every one has his own customs. But, in my opinion, it's all one. God made everything for man's enjoyment. There is no sin in anything."

The Cossack lives close to nature. Nature rouses in him no spiritual problems, because he has not yet attained the problem level. But to Olyenin life itself is a problem. He has come to the Caucasus to find meaning, genuine happiness in life. If nature is to exalt his life, it must do for him more than make it contentedly animal. Uncle Yeroshka may spend the night perched up on a tree-branch watching for wild boars, and his consciousness is blankly identical with that of the beast he hunts. But when Olyenin, with seven pheasants hanging from his belt, stretches himself on the ground in the damp, dark lair of the stag he is pursuing, he cannot become one with his environment. He cannot help philosophizing: "Here I, Dmitri Olyenin, an entity distinct from all others, am lying all alone, God knows where, in the very place where lives a stag, an old stag, a handsome fellow, and in a place, likewise, where no human being has ever been before, or thought of being. . . . Around me, flying among the leaves which seem to them like vast islands, the gnats are hovering in the air and buzzing; one, two, three, four, a hundred, a thousand, a million gnats, and each one of them is buzzing something for some special reason around me, and each one of them is a Dmitri Olyenin, an entity distinct from all the others as much as I am."

But how is a Dmitri Olyenin to conduct himself in the midst of this world of gnats and stags and Lukashkas and Maryannas in order to find true happiness? "How must I

live so as to be happy? . . . Man is endowed with a craving for happiness: therefore it must be legitimate. . . . Circumstances may make it impossible to satisfy this craving. . . . What cravings can always be satisfied independently of external conditions? Love, self-denial." Rousseau had sent the stags and gnats to raise the problem; Christ and Schopenhauer offered its solution.

Olyenin tries the altruistic path; he would sacrifice himself for others. But those whose contentment he would attain do not understand his motives. When he presents Lukashka with his horse, the Cossack brave suspects that he would bribe him for some purpose of his own. Olyenin, who respects and loves the simple *stannitza* folk, is alien to their affections; but they call the jovial rake Byeletzky "the little grandfather." Olyenin looks wistfully upon Maryanna's virgin simplicity, but Maryanna first becomes aware of his existence when, a bit tipsy at a party, he embraces her.

Olyenin's life is not so easily ordered as the life of a Lukashka. Lukashka's love for Maryanna is described in very simple language; it is a common enough emotion. But Olyenin's passion for the pink-shirt-garbed daughter of the shrewish Dame Ulitka rouses a riot of perplexities. When Lukashka is wounded in a scouting expedition, all the tenderness which Maryanna has ever felt for the child of Moscow vanishes in her wild outburst of passion for her savage gallant. To us Olyenin may be an exalted soul; to her he is contemptible, insignificant alongside of Lukashka. The love-story is ended; and—need we say it?—ended is also un-mixed Rousseauism.

Tolstoy had sought peace in the Caucasus. But wild, unmeaning peace began to tire him. The success of his writings, which in the early fifties began to appear in Nekrasov's *Sovremennik* ("The Contemporary") and caused his name

to be uttered with that of Turgenev, roused in him new ambitions. Elemental nature had not satisfied this spirit; the Crimean War roused his martial instincts, and so we find him fighting the Turks, first in Silistria, Bulgaria, and then at the siege of Sevastopol. His experiences during this terrible ordeal, Tolstoy has recorded in his three sketches, "Sevastopol in December," "in May," "in August."

War has been painted before and since in more majestic and in more terrible colors; the externals of martial life have been more tellingly delineated even by Tolstoy himself in "War and Peace"; but we may doubt if any one has succeeded in conveying the inner human atmosphere of warfare more hauntingly than Tolstoy has conveyed it in these Sevastopol sketches. He shows slight interest in the mechanics of war, it is war's spirit he would portray,—the spirit of war as it manifests itself in the manner and life of captain and sergeant and common soldier. Tolstoy possesses the uncanny power of picturing the psychology of a simple, innocent, lovable young man who comes to Sevastopol to serve his God and Czar, save his country, and win an order of merit, and who finds that to do this he must murder people and risk being murdered himself; the initial physical fear and moral recoil, the intoxication of ever-present danger, the hardening of soul by the intimate visitant Death, and the genuine and assumed stoicism which, in the life of the experienced officer and private, is so frequently accompanied by defiant daredevil gambling and joviality. Striking is the picture of the two Koseltzov brothers. The younger's eyes dim with tears because he imagines his brother is displeased with him, but on the morrow he must kill human beings callously, brutally, and gain the order of Anna or the order of Vladimir for his pains.

And, while we follow the reckless officer, the brutal offi-

cer, and the corrupt officer, and the young idealist who comes to Sevastopol to die for God and the Czar, we see and hear in the background the thousands who count only as so many privates, pawns on the chessboard of war. They live from day to day, they die stolidly without any philosophizing, jesting with death, thinking of a cross for bravery, perhaps, but much more thinking of their discharge. " 'You may say what you think, but when we've peace, we're sure to have an imperial review at Warsaw, and then, if we don't all get our discharge, we shall be put on the permanent reserve.' Just then a shrieking, glancing ball flew over the talkers' heads and struck a stone. 'Mind, or you'll get your discharge in full before to-night,' said one of the soldiers. They all laughed. And not only before night, but before two hours had passed, two of them had got their discharge in full and five more were wounded; but the rest went on joking just the same."

It is not war as glorious combat or noble self-sacrifice that Tolstoy portrays, but war in its terrible intensity, brutalizing, sordid war, war exalted in its inhumanity. He would tell the real inside truth about war: "The hero of my tale, whom I love with all the power of my soul, whom I have tried to portray in all his beauty, who has been, is, and will be beautiful, is—Truth."

Naturally the censor did not like this truth and blue-penciled the manuscript of the Sevastopol sketches in accordance with the demands of imperial Russia. But, even in their mutilated form, the stories, published in Nekrasov's *Sovremennik*, made Tolstoy the literary idol of Russia. Nekrasov wrote him: "Truth—in such a form as you have introduced it into our literature—is something completely new among us." Czar Nikolai even sent an order that special care be taken of the young writer and that he be re-

moved to a safe place, but Tolstoy insisted on sharing the dangers with his soldiers. Finally his commander ordered him to write an official account of the siege, and sent him with it as a messenger to St. Petersburg.

Here Tolstoy was received with ovations. Every favor St. Petersburg had to offer was at his disposal. Dinners, dances, fame, wine, women—all were his. But once more he turned away disenchanted. This effeminate, futile existence began to weary him. What was he supposed to be? A teacher of the people; a spiritual leader? So were all his fellow-writers. But what was he teaching Russia; what did he give in return for all this fame and money? He himself did not know. He turned to his fellow-writers, he tells us in his "Confession": "They disputed, quarreled, abused, deceived, and cheated one another. . . . Almost all of them were immoral men, most of them worthless and insignificant, and beneath the moral level of those with whom I associated during my former dissipated and military career, but conceited as only those can be who are wholly saints, or those who do not know what holiness is."

At that time the Czar Alexander II was already inaugurating the new era of liberalism, of reforms. The emancipation of the serfs was in the air; all Russia talked of the people's rights. But how were the Russian masses to be elevated? Tolstoy took his only trips to Europe—three of them—to study social and agricultural conditions, and in 1861 returned to his estate Yasnaya Polyana, freed his own serfs before the publication of the Emancipation Edict, and devoted his time to the improvement and education of his peasants. He established a school on his estate, teaching the peasant children on the theory that the child should have full freedom in his development; the teacher should not imprint his ideas and habits on the child, he

should assist the child only when assistance is demanded. This was a strange sort of education to advocate in a land like Russia. Holy Russia pestered Tolstoy until it made him ill; and while he went away to recuperate, his school was closed by orders from "on high," and thus ended Tolstoy's career as an educational reformer. On his way to Samara, where he was going to drink sour milk, he stopped over night at Moscow, and—backslid into a gambling party, with the result that he found himself with a debt of five hundred dollars. But the man who had beaten him, Katkov, was the editor of the *Russky Vjestnik*, and accepted as payment of Tolstoy's gambling debt the manuscript of "The Cosacks."

It was now the summer of 1862. Tolstoy was paying court to Sophia Behrs, and experienced the spiritual anguish which he has described in his "Confession," in the "Kreutzer Sonata," and in "Anna Karenin"; the anguish which the thoughts of his past debauches aroused in him when he thought of offering his life to a pure woman. But at least he would be honest, so just before he was married he asked his bride to read his diary, in which he had laid bare his whole life.

Sophia Behrs—or Sonya, as Tolstoy called her—made as helpful a wife as any Russian ever had. In the "Reminiscences of Tolstoy," one of the novelist's sons, Count Ilya Tolstoy, describes the daily life on his father's estate: "The chief personage in the house was my mother. She settled everything. She interviewed Nikolai the cook and ordered dinner; she sent us out for walks, made our shirts, was always nursing some baby at the breast; all day long she bustled about the house with hurried steps."

She bore Tolstoy thirteen children, five sons and three daughters of whom grew to maturity. But she was more

than a good mother and an efficient housekeeper; she was Tolstoy's literary assistant. And what a man to assist! Her son writes: "Leaning over the manuscript and trying to decipher my father's scrawl with her short-sighted eyes, she used to spend whole evenings at work, and often sat up late at night after everybody else had gone to bed. Sometimes, when anything was written quite illegibly, she would go to my father's study and ask him what it meant. But this was very rare, because my mother did not like to disturb him. When it happened, my father would take the manuscript in his hand and ask with some annoyance: 'What on earth is the difficulty?' and begin to read it out loud. When he came to the difficult place, he would mumble and hesitate, and sometimes had the greatest difficulty in making out, or rather in guessing, what he had written. He had a very bad handwriting and a terrible habit of inserting whole sentences between the lines, or in the corners of the page, or sometimes right across it. My mother often discovered gross grammatical errors, and pointed them out to my father and corrected them." Seven times over she copied the manuscript of "War and Peace."

These fifteen years, 1863-1878, were Tolstoy's most wonderful years as a creative artist. To these years we owe his two great novels, "War and Peace" and "Anna Karenin," two of the longest and greatest works of Russian fiction. Already in the fifties Russia looked up to Tolstoy for great things: Turgenev, for instance, wrote in 1854, "If heaven only grant Tolstoy life, I confidently expect he will surprise us all," and two years later Turgenev writes of him to the critic Druzhinin: "When this young wine has done fermenting, the result will be a liquor worthy of the gods." And now Tolstoy, for a few years at least, found inspiration in the life of his young and growing family. He writes in

his "Confession": "The new circumstances of a happy family life completely led me away from the search after the meaning of life as a whole. My life was concentrated at this time in the family,—my wife and children,—and consequently in the care for increasing the means of life. The effort to effect my own individual perfection, already replaced by the striving after general progress, was again changed into an effort to secure the particular happiness of my family."

He thought of portraying the spirit and the men of the uprising of December, 1825; but as he got deeper into his subject it grew; he went back to the conditions in Russia preceding the December uprising; his novel became vaster and vaster in scope until he realized that he was really writing an epic of Russia during the Napoleonic wars, an epic of Russian war and peace.

"War and Peace" is properly called an epic. It is scarcely a novel in the strict sense of the term; and if we judge it by the canons of art which we apply, for instance, to the novels of Ivan Turgenev, we shall do it scant justice. Turgenev's novels are artistically unified, balanced delineations of life; Tolstoy's "War and Peace" is limitless in its scope, with climax after climax, like a rolling steppe, endless in its expanse. Like Thomas Hardy's Napoleonic drama in nineteen acts, "War and Peace" is a texture of a dozen dramas of human life, twined and intertwined into an epic. If Turgenev's art reminds us of the exquisiteness and spirituality of Raphael, Tolstoy paints with a giant brush, paints all the world at once, like Michelangelo.

"War and Peace" does not center on the career of one man, or even of one family. Out of the hundreds that move before us and the hundreds of thousands who fill the background,—emperors, kings and princes and courtiers, and common, honest men,—the members of five families of

the Russian nobility stand out, and around their destinies the action of the novel turns: the families of the Kuragins, the Bolkonskys, the Rostovs, the Bezukhois, and the Drubetzkoi. I must confess at the very start the utter hopelessness of any attempt I may make to summarize the plot of "War and Peace." Are we to take it from the military angle? But Tolstoy's action embraces several entire campaigns, and records not only the ascendancy and decline of Napoleon and his generals, but the military careers of Austrian and Prussian generals, more learned but not wiser than Russia's "Old Man Kutuzov." The battles of Schoengrabén and Austerlitz and Borodino, the Peace of Tilsit, the sacking and burning of Smolensk and Moscow, and Napoleon's tragic retreat from Russia determine the course of events in this novel.

Or are we to approach it from the romantic angle? And what a gallery of romances! There is Count Pierre's animal passion for Princess Ellen Kuragin,—Ellen with the marble-like shoulders, enameled by the gaze of a thousand eyes that had feasted on them. Her father, Prince Vassily, had failed to rob the young man of the enormous fortune to which he is about to fall heir, but what the father's cunning had failed to obtain, his voluptuous daughter easily grasps. And an infernal family life follows. There is the purely calculating, passionless romance of the clever climber Prince Boris Drubetzkoi for the meadows and forests of Julia Kuragin; again there is the love of Count Nikolai Rostov for his devoted Sonya, for the Czar Alexander, and finally for Princess Maria Bolkonsky, the richest heiress in Russia, whom he saves from the French invasion beyond Smolensk, becoming knight beyond compare in her eyes. When his father's estate shows him a bankrupt, Rostov refuses to ask for her hand and she practically has to do the proposing for him.

And there is Natasha, wonderful, inexhaustible Natasha

Rostov, Tolstoy's dearest woman, who sings her life through the entire scale of love in all its varieties,—loving Boris adolescently, just after she had left off loving her nurse; loving her dancing-master esthetically and Captain Denisov pitifully; devotedly worshiping Prince Andrei Bolkonsky, loving him with fear and trembling as one loves a god, and ready to throw her life in passionate abandon for Prince Anatol Kuragin, whom she loves as one loves a devil; poisoning herself and almost dying of a broken heart over the deceit of a shameless libertine, and all but withering away as she tries to nurse back to life the hero of Austerlitz and of Borodino; and, after all, meeting her real destiny in Count Pierre Bezukhoi and finding perfect and lasting happiness in worrying over her many babies. This love story, or rather this story of many loves, is unutterably beautiful, for truly Tolstoy has achieved a triumph in his portrayal of Natasha Rostov, who has made herself the heroine of a novel which has a dozen heroes.

But while the "grand passion" is revealed in all its shades in this Russian epic, we must leave the consideration of it for the study of the deeper ideas in "War and Peace,"—ideas which make this book more than a novel, just as Hugo's "Misérables" is more than a novel—a great human document. Of course it is needless to say that "War and Peace" is a work of art, not a sermon; Tolstoy wrote it before he turned to sermons. And yet "War and Peace" has a message,—it is a protest against what Tolstoy regards as a mistaken interpretation of history; against the view, namely, which we generally associate with Carlyle: the ordering of mankind by heroes and geniuses. In opposition to the hero and genius, Tolstoy points to the mass, to the millions, to the people. Tolstoy's "War and Peace," in its description of the great Napoleonic battles, is a constant proclamation

of this thesis. Napoleon, who had won every battle, lost the battle of Borodino. Why? "Many historians assert that the battle of Borodino was not won by the French because Napoleon had a cold in the head; that if it had not been for this cold, his arrangements before and during the battle would have displayed still more genius, and Russia would have been conquered and the face of the world would have been changed. . . . If it had depended on Napoleon's will to fight or not to fight the battle of Borodino, on his will to make or not to make such and such dispositions of his forces, then evidently the cold in his head, which had such influence on the manifestations of his will, may have been the cause of the salvation of Russia; and the valet who, on September 5, forgot to provide Napoleon with waterproof boots was the saviour of Russia."

But this is entirely wrong, as wrong as it is to believe that there is such a thing as a science of war, or that one man can really prearrange, not in details, but even in its most general outlines, the course that a battle will take. "No one can possibly know," Prince Andrei says, "what will be the position of our army and that of the enemy a day from now, and no one can know what is the force of this or that division. Sometimes, when there is no coward in the front to cry, 'We are cut off!' and to start the panic, and there is a jovial, audacious man there to shout, 'Hurrah!' a division of five thousand is worth thirty thousand, as was the case at Schoengraben; and sometimes fifty thousand will fly before eight, as happened at Austerlitz. Why did we lose the battle of Austerlitz?" Prince Andrei tells Pierre on the eve of the battle of Borodino: "Our loss was not much greater than that of the French, but we said to ourselves very early in the engagement that we should lose it, and we did lose it. And we said this because there was no reason

for being in a battle there, and we were anxious to get away from the battle-field as soon as possible. 'We have lost, so let us run,' and we did run. If we had not said this till evening, God knows what would have happened. But to-morrow we shall not say that. You say our position, the left flank, is weak, the right flank too much extended, . . . but that is all nonsense. It is not so at all. For what is before us to-morrow? A hundred millions of the most various possibilities, which will be decided instantaneously by the fact that either they or our men will start to run, this one or that one will be killed."

And in criticizing this view of war—and of human events in general—let us remember that Tolstoy fought at Sevastopol, fought not with the general staff, but in the trenches. The battle of Schoengraben was won for Russia by a captain who held his ground and disobeyed his orders,—and was almost court-martialed for his pains by the learned strategists who smelled the smoke from afar, while he was winning the battle for them in spite of their tactics.

Russia defeated Napoleon simply by keeping out of his way and letting him straggle along to his destruction. And therein lies the true greatness of Kutuzov, Russia's Grand Old Man, of whom this book is a eulogy. A plea for the masses, for the countless millions who are never taken into account, such is "War and Peace," and as such it already anticipates Tolstoy's later populism. Yet it is an immortal portrayal of Russia's aristocracy, too, in the days of the first Alexander. It is also an international novel, and in it Tolstoy has shown himself a master. Across his stage move French marshals, Austrian archdukes, German generals, and Russians of all varieties, and all true to life, typical bearers of their national characters.

Quite obvious it is, and quite interesting in view of the

present war, that Tolstoy is no worshipper of German wisdom. "The Frenchman," he says, "is self-confident because he considers himself individually, both as regards mind and body, irresistibly captivating to either men or women. The Englishman is self-confident through his absolute conviction that he is a citizen of the most fortunately constituted kingdom in the world, and because, as an Englishman, he knows always and in all circumstances what it is requisite for him to do, and also knows that all that he does as an Englishman is correct beyond cavil. The Italian is self-confident because he is excitable and easily forgets himself and others. The Russian is self-confident for the precise reason that he knows nothing and wishes to know nothing, because he believes that it is impossible to know anything. But the German is self-confident in a worse way than all the rest, above and beyond all the rest, because he imagines that he knows the truth,—the science which he has himself invented, but which for him is absolute truth!"

Already in "War and Peace" we see Tolstoy grappling with two great problems of a moral-religious character: the problem of the meaning of life and the problem of love and marriage. Count Pierre and Prince Andrei spend their whole lives in trying to find some meaning in life, some ideal which will illumine it and make it precious, worth while. And we notice that, while Pierre's marriage to Princess Ellen is the most piteous—indeed, the most wicked—mesalliance, Tolstoy would not let his hero love and marry the wonderful Natasha until after his wretched wife is dead. These two problems Tolstoy now takes up in portraying Konstantin Levin's spiritual struggle to find the meaning of human life and a worthy ideal, and the adulterous passion which works chaos in the lives of Alexey Vronsky and Anna Karenin. To this next novel, Tolstoy's masterpiece, we must now turn.

"Anna Karenin" is the greatest portrayal of adulterous love in the history of fiction. The heroine, Anna, is an honest soul whose virtue has made her famous in dissolute St. Petersburg; beautiful, deeply emotional, craving love, she has been married to Alexey Karenin, a high public official twice her age, who gives her a fine house and social prestige, but who is too much occupied with his career as a statesman and is of too cold a nature to give her what she desires above all,—plain, unqualified love. Alexey Karenin is the sort of man who, after saying a loving word to his wife, takes pains to preserve his dignity by laughing at himself lest she consider him sentimental. Another Alexey comes on the scene—Alexey Vronsky, dashing, brilliant, handsome, courteous, generous, passionate, a very knight of love, ready to throw his military career, his reputation—his all—to the four winds of heaven for her sake. And before very long Alexey Karenin finds that the wife he has been too busy to love is no longer his to love.

Adultery has never had so fine a chance to justify itself as it does in "Anna Karenin." At the beginning there is something volcanic—and something almost worthy, too—in this passion; it commands respect. What is it, then, that inevitably causes the tragic ruin of the dénouement? To be sure, "the greater number of the young women, who envied Anna and had long been weary of hearing her called 'virtuous,' rejoiced at the fulfilment of their predictions, and were waiting only for a decisive turn in public opinion to fall upon her with all the weight of their scorn. They were already making ready their handfuls of mud to fling at her when the right moment arrived." But Vronsky's social position is such that he can safely challenge society to insult him and his mistress. He is rich, he installs her in his home in all imaginable luxury. Anna's husband is ready to give her her freedom. Why, then, isn't she happy?

None of the hackneyed punishments would do for Tolstoy. It is not for men to punish those who have broken the law of God. "Vengeance is mine; I will repay," reads the motto of this novel. Anna is outwardly happy; she drinks the cup of love to the full,—and where could she find another lover like Vronsky! "But in dreams, when she had no control over her thoughts, her position presented itself to her in all its hideous nakedness. One dream haunted her almost every night. She dreamed that both were her husband at once, that both were lavishing caresses upon her. Alexey Alexandrovitch was weeping, kissing her hands and saying, 'How happy we are now!' And Alexey Vronsky was there, too; and he, too, was her husband. And she was marveling that it had once seemed impossible to her, was explaining to them, laughing, that this was ever so much simpler, and that now both of them were happy and contented. But this dream weighed on her like a nightmare, and she awoke from it in terror."

This is the punishment: Anna's own moral nature punishes her. Love has mastered her, and for the sake of love she has scorned all; but love has torn her spiritual nature in two. Love for Vronsky has led her to desert her husband, but the pure love for her son, which is the spark of God within her, keeps her from yielding completely to Vronsky, tears her soul, and makes her love a succession of the most intense happiness and the most unspeakable agony. The questioning, innocent eyes of her boy Seryozha haunt her: from the moment she has left her lover to visit her son, we know that she will never be happy. She hates her former husband for his forgiving spirit. "I have heard it said that women love men even for their vices," Anna exclaims to her brother; "but I hate him for his virtues. I can't live with him. Do you understand? The sight of him has a physical effect on me; it makes me beside myself. I can't—I can't

live with him. What am I to do? . . . Would you believe it that, knowing he's a good man, a splendid man,—that I'm not worth his little finger,—still, I hate him! I hate him for his generosity!"

But this sort of thing cannot last. Vronsky, who has been urging her to avail herself of her husband's offer, obtain her divorce, and marry him, at last begins to grow weary of the irregular relation. Or so it appears to Anna. She begins to be tortured by jealousy; she agrees to ask her husband to divorce her, but now he refuses. Anna is in despair; her groundless doubts of her lover, her growing irritability, her frenzied passion, which literally maddens her, complete the ruin which her adulterous passion had begun. Immediately after a quarrel with her, Vronsky has gone on a business visit. She writes him to come to her immediately. His delay in answering infuriates her; she will punish him, she says, in the only way she knows,—by killing herself. And the wheels of a railroad train under which she throws herself end the tragedy of her life.

Pestilential is illicit passion, Tolstoy tells us. But is human life truly blessed even by honest love alone? Can self-seeking love under any conditions supply men with the solution of the problem of life? Can it *by itself* make a spiritually sensitive man truly contented? This question Tolstoy attempts to answer in his story of the love and married life of Konstantin Levin and Kitty Shtcherbatzky, which forms the counterpart in this novel of the adulterous love of Alexey Vronsky and Anna Karenin.

The portrait of Konstantin Levin is autobiographic. There is, to be sure, something of Tolstoy's own character in the two main figures of "War and Peace," Prince Andrei and Count Pierre Bezukhoi; but Konstantin Levin utters in the pages of "Anna Karenin" the thoughts and dreams

which, a few years later, Tolstoy is to utter in his own name. Therefore it is essential to our understanding of this later Tolstoy—the Tolstoy from the year 1880 on—that we see what forces of spiritual unrest make this Tolstoyan hero unable to find perfect bliss in the love of a devoted, beautiful woman like Kitty Shtcherbatzky.

Levin is a wealthy landowner of an incurably serious turn of mind. He is not a saint; the book of his youth contains filthy pages of debauch; but his miserable memory of them is matched by an equally wretched consciousness of the futility of his outwardly blameless mature life. He is gloomy, not because he is vicious, but because he can see no meaning, no worthwhileness in a virtuous life. He is ambitious, and yet his every undertaking seems empty and futile. Needless to say, he scorns the silly fripperies of society; but even in the honest toil of his own farm he fails to find lasting satisfaction. Life is vanity to him. Life with Kitty Shtcherbatzky, he dreams, would be life worth living. Kitty respects him profoundly, but she loves Vronsky and refuses Levin. When Vronsky forsakes her for Anna Karenin, Kitty is almost killed by the humiliation, and even more by the realization of the sterling qualities of the man she has rejected. Kind fate intervenes, however, and in the course of time Levin and Kitty do marry.

The new life satisfies him for a while, even as married life contented Tolstoy himself; but the old questions and the old discontent return, due in part, though not entirely, to the inevitable frictions and quarrels of a married couple whose only fault is perhaps that they love each other too devotedly. But the death of his wretched brother and the birth of his child, two events which Tolstoy describes in an unforgettable manner, bring Levin face to face with the problems of life and death. What answer can he find to

those questions in the materialistic, so-called scientific beliefs which for him had replaced the simple Christian faith of his childhood? Like a man seeking for food in toy-shops and tool-shops, he reads over scientific and philosophical books, seeking an answer to the question: What makes life worth living? He abandons materialistic philosophy and reads and rereads thoroughly Plato, Spinoza, Kant, Schelling, Hegel, and Schopenhauer. But he can get no light, and his spirit is tortured. " 'Without knowing what I am and why I am here, life's impossible; and that I can't know, and so I can't live,' Levin said to himself. 'In infinite time, in infinite matter, in infinite space, is formed a bubble-organism, and that bubble lasts awhile and bursts, and that bubble is Me. . . .' And Levin, a happy father and husband, in perfect health, was several times so near suicide that he hid the rope that he might not be tempted to hang himself, and was afraid to go out with his gun for fear of shooting himself."

He takes good care of his peasants, he is honest in his dealings, he is true and loving to his wife,—but what is it all about, he asks himself as he watches his peasants working. " 'Why is it all being done? Why am I standing here making them work? What are they all so busy for, trying to show their zeal before me? What is that old peasant woman toiling for? I doctored her once when the beam fell on her in the fire,' he thought, looking at a thin old woman who was raking up the grain, moving painfully with her bare, sun-blackened feet over the rough, uneven floor. 'Then she recovered, but to-day or to-morrow or in ten years she won't; they'll bury her, and nothing will be left either of her or of that smart girl in the red jacket, who, with that skilful soft action, shakes the ears out of their husks. They'll bury her and that piebald horse, and very soon, too,' he thought,

gazing at the heavily moving, panting horse that kept walking up the wheel that turned under him. 'And they'll bury her and Fyodor the thresher with his curly beard full of chaff and his shirt torn on his white shoulders,—they'll bury him. He is untying the sheaves and giving orders and shouting to the women, and quickly setting straight the strap on the moving wheel. And what's more, it's not them alone,—me they'll bury, too, and nothing will be left. What for?' "

To some people all this may seem so much morbid introspection. Where ignorance is bliss, 'tis folly to be wise. But such bliss is vouchsafed only to fools and cattle. A calf may graze its way into cattlehood without being bothered by problems; but man is not a calf, although millions of men remain calf-like in their attitude toward life. Man must have a philosophy of life or perish spiritually. In addition to having hunger and thirst and other animal needs and the means of satisfying them, Levin is a man, and the problems which oppress his soul must be solved, or at least understood, else he cannot live.

A peasant accidentally enlightens him. He speaks of a friend of his who "lives for God, for his soul." To the peasant this seems perfectly clear, but the idea of it staggers Levin. What does it mean to live for God, for one's soul? Why is it that the ignorant peasant understands that which the learned landowner cannot? But an even greater puzzle confronts him: the peasant thinks that he, Levin, is also such a man, living for God, for his soul. Can it be that the peasant is right? Levin looks into his life. Could it be possible that, while his intellect has been making him miserable, deeper down in his soul truths too profound for words have been shaping the actual course of his life? "What did this mean? It meant that he had been living rightly, but thinking wrongly. He had lived, without being aware of it, on those

spiritual truths which he had sucked in with his mother's milk; but he had thought not merely without recognition of these truths, but studiously ignoring them. . . . What should I have been, and how should I have spent my life, if I had not had these beliefs," he asks himself,—“had I not known that I must live for God and not for my own desires? . . . I looked for an answer to my question. And thought could not give an answer to my question—it is incommensurable with my question. The answer has been given me by life itself, in my knowledge of what is right and what is wrong. And that knowledge I did not arrive at in any way; it is given to me as to all men, given because I could not have got it from anywhere. Where could I have got it? By reason could I have arrived at knowing that I must love my neighbor and not oppress him? I was told that in my childhood and I believed it gladly, for they told me what was already in my soul. But who discovered it? Not reason. Reason discovered the struggle for existence and the law that requires us to oppress all who hinder the satisfaction of our desires. That is the deduction of reason. But loving one's neighbor, reason could never discover, because it is irrational.”

It would of course be rank injustice to Tolstoy as an artist to say that he is preaching here. Tolstoy the novelist portrays life objectively and very often in direct opposition to what appears to be his own personal thesis. Thus the Russian critic Pisarev wrote of “War and Peace”: “The figures he has created have their own life independently of the intentions of the author; they enter into direct relations with the reader, speak for themselves, and unavoidably bring the reader to such thoughts and conclusions as the author never had in view and of which he perhaps would not approve.” Nevertheless it is quite clear to any intelligent reader of

"Anna Karenin" that here we have not merely a portrayal of men in spiritual struggles and anguish, but the portrayal of them by an author who is himself struggling and anguished spiritually. We know now what the men who read "Anna Karenin" as it was published serially in the seventies did not know—the struggle of life and death which was going on in Tolstoy's soul; a struggle between the artist and the man, a struggle of the man whose genius the world admired and approved, but who could not admire his own work because he was not sure that God approved it; indeed, was not certain there was any God to approve it, and found his life poisoned by the uncertainty. The masterpiece he was creating seemed to him paltry, futile. "Everything in it is beastly," he writes; "the whole thing ought to be rewritten, scrapped and melted down, thrown away and renounced. I ought to say I am sorry, I won't do it any more. What difficulty is there in writing how an officer fell in love with a married woman? There is no difficulty in it, and, above all, no good in it." Think of the spiritual state a man must be in if, capable of writing a masterpiece like "Anna Karenin," he is also capable of writing thus about it!

Tolstoy had gained the whole world, yet had not found his soul. He had a happy family and a well-managed estate of twenty-five hundred acres. The whole world applauded his art. Yet he contemplated suicide. There must be some way out of it. How he found this way, and how unreservedly he entered upon it, to the sacrifice of every other ideal, every other interest, is the story of the last thirty years of Tolstoy's life, and is one of the most impressive spiritual documents of modern times.

LECTURE V

THE GOSPEL OF TOLSTOY THE APOSTLE

AT the age of fifty Tolstoy looked back on his life and found it meaningless, a sorry jest, "a foolish and a wicked joke." "Vanity of vanities," Tolstoy repeated with Ecclesiastes and with Schopenhauer: the game is not worth the candle; life is a business that does not pay expenses; it is a tragic failure.

Yet Count Tolstoy was distinctly not a failure, as the world counts failure. On the contrary, he was a brilliant success. The descendant of a distinguished family, with an enviable military record, an honored country gentleman of excellent health, with a family of seven admiring children and a devoted wife of remarkable intelligence and efficiency, a wealthy man, admired by all the world for his literary genius,—what could he desire that was not at his disposal? Tolstoy is not to be reckoned among those who scoff at a success which they have failed to achieve; who scorn the puzzles they find too difficult to solve; who turn their backs on the world because the world has already turned its back on them. It was *after* he had won the worldly game that he found it not worth playing.

The more he saw of life, and the more he thought about life, the less satisfied he became. "What is the meaning of it all?" he kept asking himself. He had six thousand *desyatins* of land in the government of Samara, and three hundred horses. Suppose he had sixty thousand *desyatins* and as many horses,—what then? He was a famous writer. But suppose he became still more famous: "more famous than Gogol, Pushkin, Shakespeare, Molière, than all the writers

in the world—well, what then?” What was it all about? Why should he, Count Lyof Tolstoy, with his thousands of acres, healthy, rich, admired, loved, possessing all the things his heart could desire; *why* should he be living at all? “Is there any meaning in my life which will not be destroyed by the inevitable death awaiting me?” Science answered all questions but this, the most important. Experimental science refused even to entertain it; and, if abstract philosophy recognized it, it found it an insoluble puzzle.

“I could find no reply. Such questions will not wait; they demand an immediate answer; without one it is impossible to live; but answer there was none. I felt that the ground on which I stood was crumbling, that there was nothing for me to stand on, that what I had been living for was nothing, that I had no reason for living.” While Russia marveled at the genius revealed in Tolstoy’s portrayal of Levin’s spiritual anguish in “Anna Karenin,” that genius himself battled with the same problems and, despairing of finding an answer, contemplated hanging himself from the cross-beam of the very study in which he had been composing his masterpieces, and “ceased to go hunting with a gun because it offered too easy a way of getting rid of life.”

And then occurred a most remarkable conversion—a Russian conversion, which robbed Russia and the world of a master-novelist, but gave us all—who can tell?—perhaps something even greater. A deep change came in Tolstoy’s life. Not a sudden change, but rather the clear recognition of a truth which must have been lurking in his inner nature during his whole life, which sent him away in disgust from the University of Kazan, which made him loathe himself after his periods of dissolute living and gambling at Yasnaya Polyana, which appears in all his works and is revealed in all his great characters, in Dmitri Olyenin, in

Prince Andrei and Pierre Bezukhoi, and especially in Konstantin Levin. Let us follow Tolstoy as he awakes to the light which had long glimmered within him, as he discovers for himself and proclaims to all men the true meaning of life.

Sated with human vanity and success, rich, distinguished, he had nevertheless contemplated suicide. "Yet how do other people of my class manage to live?" Tolstoy asked himself. He found four ways out. The first way consisted in being ignorant of the fact that life is an absurdity, vanity, and evil: "Where ignorance is bliss, 'tis folly to be wise." That way was shut to Tolstoy, for he was already confronted with the problem of life. The second way out was to make the best of life as it is without thinking of the future. "But," says Tolstoy, "my imagination was too lively for that." The third way was the conclusion which the suicide draws, and this way Tolstoy understood and regarded as the worthiest, but for some reason he did not kill himself. The fourth way was to accept life as described by Ecclesiastes and Schopenhauer, and yet to live on, to wash, dress, dine, talk, and even write books. This position was revolting and painful to Tolstoy, but he adopted and maintained it.

"To see the inanity of life is a simple matter enough, and it has long been apparent to the simplest, but men have lived and still live on. Why is it that men live on?" Tolstoy asked again; and now he turned, not to his own class, but to the peasants. If life was unendurable to him, how could they bear it? They lacked the pleasures and comforts of the rich and the culture of the educated; their life was indeed a benighted and a hard life, yet they lived contentedly to a ripe old age. Tolstoy could not understand why those millions of human beings should endure their poverty when he found life in opulence intolerable. Surely, said Tolstoy, those

peasants must possess something which I and my class, the wealthy landowners, do not possess. There must be a real meaning in life for those peasants, and in their humble, ignorant way they must be able to see that meaning, otherwise they would not live so contentedly on their bread and onions. The peasants told him they tried to follow the law of God; but what could be the meaning of that law? The skeptic unbeliever Tolstoy found that here was another question he could not answer. Was it indeed possible that the secret of life's meaning lay in the pious beliefs of the Orthodox Church, which he, early in life, had discarded as dark superstitions? His family of course were religious enough, and as a writer of Russian life he had always taken an objective interest in the faith of the masses. But now the possible truth of this religion became to him personally a matter of life and death. The peasants seemed to have the secret; he, Tolstoy, would pause at nothing, would sacrifice all, if he could only gain the peasant's peace of soul, if he could attain the sense that life is worth while and not a shallow mockery. This was the first step in his conversion. He turned his back on all his wealth, on all his aristocratic past, on all his learning, science; and philosophy; he went back to the old religion, determined to live the orthodox, pious life of the peasant and learn God's law.

One may wonder, perhaps, how it could have been possible for a deep, cultured thinker like Tolstoy to return to the crass superstitions and ritual of the Russian Orthodox Church. In spite of the superstitious character of the peasant's piety, however, Tolstoy could not help recognizing its self-forgetting character, which somehow lifted it above all his self-centered learning and modern culture.

But, though he was giving the old faith a new trial, the inspiration to follow the law of God, which he got from the

peasants, could not long blind his keen eyes to the benighted stupidity of the orthodox theology. The peasant has no intellectual demands, Tolstoy reasoned; his religion is one of unthinking devotion to God. But my devotion to God must not outrage my active mind. The peasant's theology may contain absurdities,—they are not absurdities to him, and one story is as good as another. But I cannot be contented as long as my mind is called upon to believe in absurdities. "My position was terrible," he writes. "I knew that from the knowledge which reason has given man I could get nothing but the denial of life, and from faith nothing but the denial of reason, which latter was more impossible than the denial of life. . . . If I went by faith, it resulted that, in order to understand the meaning of life, I should have to abandon reason, the very part of me that required a meaning in life!"

But was it the peasant's belief, his theology, which gave him his peace of soul? Was it not rather his religion, his love of God, which his ignorant mind had translated in the terms of his superstitious theology? "The true office of any faith is to give to life a meaning which death cannot destroy. . . . Live to seek God, and life will not be without God." That same love of God, Tolstoy considered, which keeps the unthinking peasant orthodox, will lead me to understand perhaps more clearly the Gospel of Jesus. Thus my heart will worship God, and my intellect will honestly seek to understand His law. Accordingly Tolstoy turned with heart and soul to the critical study of the Bible, especially of the Four Gospels, and about the years 1880-81 we find him hard at work on his "Criticism of Dogmatic Theology" and on his own translation of the Gospels. His conclusion is that orthodox theology has distorted the simple, straightforward meaning of Christ's Gospel.

Now the fact that Church-Christianity misinterprets the Gospel of Christ was for Tolstoy no reflection on Christ's own teaching. The history of all religious faiths manifests the same degeneration, the same obscuring of their initial clarity in a fog of ritualism and misshapen theology; but to scorn the Bibles of humanity merely because men have distorted their message is utterly to miss the point. The Vedas, the Zend Avesta, the Old and New Testaments have given rise to superstitions because first of all they conquered the souls of men and changed their lives. But, Tolstoy maintains, Aristotle, Bacon, Comte never were and never will be subjected to superstitious distortions and excrescences precisely because they are insignificant, because they miss the truth of life, and can therefore never influence the mass of humanity. The true message of all great religions is this: "There is a God, the source of all; in man there is a particle of this divine element which he can either diminish or increase by his life; to increase this element man must suppress his passions and increase love in himself; the practical means to attain this is to act with others as one wishes others to act toward oneself." "True religion is the establishment by man of such a relation to the Infinite Life around him as, while connecting his life with this Infinitude and directing his conduct, is also in agreement with his reason and with human knowledge." Such is the true religion of Christ.

Before we can grasp this meaning, it is necessary that we recognize an idea which is plain to any one who reads the Gospels with an open mind. Jesus was not a theologian; His aim was to point out to man the way to God. It is not a dogmatic, intellectual, scientific doctrine about God which Jesus offers us; it is a new ideal of life. There is in all of us a spiritual nature, a sense of God and a love of God—we are all children of the same Father. But most of us are prodigal

sons; we have forgotten our divine origin and destiny, we have forsaken the home of our Father, and are wasting our substance in riotous living. Jesus would rouse this our dormant spiritual nature, inspire in us prodigals the desire to return to our Father; to find the meaning of life; to learn how we can live for God, for our souls. And Tolstoy devoted himself with double enthusiasm to finding what Jesus had to say about the life of the spiritually regenerated sinner, the man born anew.

Meanwhile his friends and admirers were troubled as they watched him forsaking literature and devoting himself to Bible study. His wife, the Countess, writes to her sister: "He reads and thinks till his head aches, and all to show how incompatible the Church is with the teaching of the Gospel. Hardly ten people in Russia will be interested in it; but there is nothing to be done. I only wish he would get it done quicker, and that it would pass like an illness!" And Turgenev, whose admiration for Tolstoy's literary genius was not affected by the fact that he could not get along with him personally, writes to his friend Polonsky: "It is an unpardonable sin that Lyof Tolstoy has stopped writing; he is a man who could be extraordinarily useful, but what can one do with him? He does not utter a word, and, worse than that, he has plunged into mysticism. . . . He has plunged headlong into another sphere; has surrounded himself with Bibles and Gospels in nearly all languages, and has written a whole heap of papers. He has a trunk full of these mystical ethics and of various pseudo-interpretations. He read me some of it, which I simply do not understand. . . . I told him, '*That* is not the real thing'; but he replied, 'It is just the real thing.' . . . Very probably he will give nothing more to literature; or if he reappears, it will be with that trunk." And from his death-bed Turgenev wrote him one

last pathetic appeal not to forsake the art which he had glorified. The letter illustrates so clearly the great hopes which Tolstoy's conduct was shattering, and likewise Turgenev's own nobility of soul, that I cannot refrain from quoting it here in full:

"KIND AND DEAR LYOF NIKOLAYEVITCH:

"I have long not written to you because, to tell the truth, I have been and am on my death-bed. I cannot recover: that is out of the question. I am writing to you especially to say how glad I have been to be your contemporary, and to express my last and sincere request. My friend, return to literary activity! That gift came to you from whence comes all the rest. Ah, how happy I should be if I could think that my request would have an effect on you! I am played out—the doctors do not even know what to call my malady, *névralgie stomacale goutteuse*. I can neither walk nor eat nor sleep. It is wearisome even to repeat it all! My friend—great writer of our Russian land—listen to my request! Let me know you have received this scrap of paper, and allow me once more cordially to embrace you, your wife, and all yours. . . . I can write no more. . . . I am tired."

All these protests were futile. Some readers of Tolstoy would even add that they were superfluous. In the spiritual condition in which he found himself, Tolstoy could no longer look at life as he had looked at it when he was writing his famous novels,—objectively, as a painter or a sculptor looks at his model, trying to recreate it, whether it be a beautiful, fresh, goddess-like form or the shriveled body of a hag. To Tolstoy life and the portrayal of life meant something different now, and if he had kept on writing in violence to his convictions, his work would doubtless have shown his insincerity. As a matter of fact, he had not abandoned his art;

he had simply gained a new conception of his art, and if he did not produce another "Anna Karenin," he produced other things, in their way perhaps equally great. In a word, he was growing spiritually. He was not like his friend, the poet Fet, who, as Tolstoy puts it, wrote at the age of sixteen, "The spring bubbles, the moon shines, and she loves me!" and who went on writing and writing, and at sixty wrote: "She loves me, and the spring bubbles and the moon shines!"

Certain it is that, as far as his fame and his influence on the world are concerned, Tolstoy did not cease growing after 1880; and as to his literary art, his play "The Power of Darkness"—to mention only one example—exercised on European literature an influence quite equal to that of his novels. One does not need to make a literary apology for the creator of characters like Akim or of scenes like that of Mitritch and the ten-year-old Anyutka or the finale of the drama. A notable English critic called "The Power of Darkness" "the great modern play, the great play of the nineteenth century." But Tolstoy's chief aim now was not to portray life objectively; he had a mission, and that mission was to understand and proclaim Christ's ideal of human life. If his friends and former admirers thought that he had turned his back on life, it was because they, and not he, misunderstood life's meaning. So he writes to Fet: "I reject neither real life nor the labor necessary for its maintenance; but it seems to me that the greater part of my life and yours is taken up with satisfying, not our natural wants, but wants invented by us, or artificially inoculated by our education, and that have become habitual to us; and that nine-tenths of the work we devote to satisfying these demands is idle work."

The fallacy of human life is this, and this only: that the average man devotes all his endeavors, energy, and thought

to devising ways and means of self-gratification and self-aggrandisement. Man seeks his own interest, his own pleasures, his own power; man thinks he can never be so happy as when he can enforce his will on the will of all other men. This egoism, this lust for self-assertion and self-indulgence, sexual, economic, political, intellectual, is responsible for the evils in life; this egoism poisons the family life and the social fabric of our civilization, and it makes thought lead to cynical pessimism instead of yielding spiritual peace. "We pierce mountains, we fly round the world," Tolstoy exclaims in "Life." "Electricity, microscopes, telephones, wars, parliaments, philanthropy, the struggle of parties, universities, learned societies, museums,—is this life? The whole of men's complicated, seething activity, with their trafficking, their wars, their roads of communication, their science and their arts, is for the most part only the thronging of the unintelligent crowd about the doorway of life." Now it is precisely in pointing out and correcting this evil, this fallacy of egoism, that Christ's new conception of life consists. "Whoso saveth his life shall lose it. And he that loseth his life for my sake, the same shall find it." That is, "only by renouncing that which is destined to perish, our animal personality, shall we acquire our true life which will not and cannot perish. Our true life begins only when we cease to count as life that which was not and could not be our life—our animal existence."

Like Plato, Tolstoy exalts reason above the appetites; but, like Christ, he finds the essential activity of the higher nature of man, not in the theoretic sphere, but in the sphere of self-forgetting affection. "Life is the activity of the animal personality subjected to the law of reason. Reason is that law to which, for its own happiness, the animal personality of man must be rendered subservient." These words

from "Life" might have been quoted from the "Republic," but the conclusion of Tolstoy's paragraph is a New Testament idea: "Love is the only reasonable activity of mankind." Jesus had said, "Love thy neighbor as thyself." Confronted by the necessity of making a choice between his own and his neighbor's interests, Tolstoy would make Christ's dictum even more explicit and emphatic: "Love thy neighbor better than thyself." This is the gospel of Christ uttered in positive terms; its negative statement is the gospel of non-resistance.

To match the Decalogue of Mount Sinai, Tolstoy finds in the Sermon on the Mount five commandments which Jesus has stated with unquestionable clearness and simplicity, and which should be recognized as the foundation of the genuine Christian religion.

"Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment; but I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment." This is a hard commandment,—so hard, indeed, that some wise theologians sought to improve on the words of Jesus by adding, after "whosoever is angry with his brother," the words, "without a cause," thus nullifying the force, and indeed the sense, of the whole passage. But Christ said simply: Anger in the heart is murder; be not angry. And when Jesus added the admonition against calling one's brother "Raca" or "Thou fool," he emphasized the moral claim which each man has upon us. We are not to excuse our anger and the evil we do to some men by saying that the object of our anger is a worthless or foolish man. "Treat every man always as an end, and never as a means only,"—to use the Kantian version of the same moral imperative.

The second commandment of Jesus stresses the spiritual

element in another department of life, and that one of the most intimate. Here again Jesus is perfectly clear: "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: but I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." This, Tolstoy says, is Christ's clear message; it condemns lust unreservedly. All the glorification of passion, be it veiled in never so beautiful a manner, is at heart lust and opposed to Christ's teaching. It matters little whether a union of passion is sanctified by church or society, or is in secret or in frank defiance of social and religious conventions: it is all the same so long as it is not transfigured by a motive nobler than the motive of self-gratification. If the basis of a marriage is pleasure, that marriage is adultery in God's eyes; it is surely damned. So Tolstoy writes to his son Ilya, who is about to be married: "If one marries in order to enjoy oneself, no good will ever come of it. To set up as one's main object, ousting everything else, marriage, union with the being you love, is a great mistake. . . . Object, marriage. Well, you marry; and what then? If you had no other object in life before your marriage, it will be twice as fearfully hard, almost impossible, to find one. In fact, you may be sure, if you had no common purpose before your marriage, nothing can bring you together, you will keep getting further apart. Marriage can never bring happiness unless those who marry have a common purpose."

It is doubtful whether any other Tolstoyan doctrine has suffered as much misrepresentation as this idea in which, following Jesus, Tolstoy denounces sensuality. A survey of the shelves of public libraries finds no other work of Tolstoy's so dog-eared and thumb-soiled as "The Kreutzer Sonata," a book which some self-complacent guardians of

the public weal have regarded as a menace to social morals, and which thousands of greedy readers have professed to treat as an attack on the family. "The Kreutzer Sonata" is a plain-spoken work, and on that account shares with Ibsen's "Ghosts" and Shaw's "Mrs. Warren's Profession" the features objectionable to those who tolerate and indeed find pleasure in the appeal of gorgeously veiled salacity, but for whom the undisguised portrayal of naked, hideous vice is anathema. Tolstoy shows himself to be an enemy of vice, whether commercialized or sanctioned by society; he is an enemy of divorce in any form, but of lifelong marriage loyalty he is no enemy. Those who find in "The Kreutzer Sonata" an animal conception of the marriage relation and an insult to the higher nature of man miss utterly Tolstoy's point.

In his advocacy of this idea Tolstoy pauses at no conclusion. A man who has possessed a woman only physically has killed in her and in himself the spark of divine life. That life cannot be resurrected by mere remorse or by any material restitution; moral union alone can atone for the hideous wrong inflicted. The only salvation from the sin committed in betraying a human soul into a union of lust is to win that soul back through a moral union of lifelong loyalty. This idea is the fundamental theme of the novel "Resurrection."

Prince Dmitri Nekhludov, serving on a jury, is thunder-struck when he sets eyes on the person of the prisoner Kate-
rina Maslova, a prostitute, accused of poisoning a merchant; for she is none other than a woman whom he had betrayed years ago. Of the murder charge she is innocent, but through a technical error she is condemned to four years in Siberia. Nekhludov determines to save her, to repair the wrong he has done her, to marry her. Thus far he follows the Tolstoyan text, while the official whom he apprises of his

intentions reflects: "There is something abnormal in the young men of to-day."

But she who had lost her virtue with such tragic suddenness is not so suddenly reclaimed, now that she has dwelt in the gutters of vice until her whole soul is prostituted. When he meets her in the prison, and in an outburst of heroic repentance begs her forgiveness, she smiles luringly at him, considering how she can best use him, and ends by asking him for ten rubles. There is no immediate reconciliation; Tolstoy is too great a realist to paint any such sentimentally easy triumphs of virtue. Maslova hates Nekhludov for torturing her soul with memories which she had buried forever. "You've got pleasure out of me in this life, and want to save yourself through me in the life to come. You are disgusting to me—your spectacles and the whole of your dirty mug!" But his persistent, self-forgetting determination to atone for the wrong done her gradually melts the ice-caverns of that dreary soul; with imperceptible slowness the light of a new life begins to glimmer in the dim recesses of Maslova's being. After Nekhludov's third interview with her, the prostitute for the first time refuses to drink. "Well, shall we have a drop?" a fellow-prisoner asks her. "You have some," she answers. "I won't."

The struggle is long—it is at first a struggle between the prostitute and the long-buried woman in Maslova's soul. But as the prisoners approach Siberia a new struggle begins; a struggle in which new-born love for Nekhludov battles in her heart with a higher emotion, an emotion similar to Nekhludov's own feeling toward her, a passion of self-abnegation. For her sake, to atone for the wrong he had done her, to lift her, save her, make her life bright, Prince Nekhludov had negated his own aristocratic existence and forgotten all thoughts of self. The time will come when she will rise to

equal heights of self-forgetting devotion. Valdemar Simonson, who has fallen in love with her, asks her to marry him. She accepts him. "By going with Simonson, she thought she would be setting Nekhludov free, and felt glad that she had done what she meant to do; and yet she suffered at parting from him." Could one protest that this conclusion of the novel does not adhere literally to the second commandment of Jesus as formulated by Tolstoy?

The third commandment of Jesus affects the political sphere. "Ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths; but I say unto you, Swear not at all. . . . But let your communication be Yea, yea; Nay, nay." This Tolstoy interprets as Christ's attitude toward government. Keep your spiritual freedom, Jesus says. God alone is your King. Do not today pledge yourself absolutely to duties and alliances of which your better conscience may not approve tomorrow. Do not surrender to another man the right to act at any future moment in accordance with your best light. Patriotic loyalty, one's oath to one's king, have led millions to kill each other in senseless wars. "The snare is in the use of God's name to sanction an imposture, and the imposture consists in promising in advance to obey the commands of one man, while I ought to obey the command of God alone. I know now that the most terrible evil in its consequences—murders in war, imprisonments, capital punishments—exists only because of the oath in virtue of which men make themselves instruments of evil, and believe that they free themselves from all responsibility. . . ."

The fourth commandment is: "Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies." Jesus here means to say, You have heard that love of your own

people, of your own country,—in a word, patriotism,—is good; but I tell you, love those of other nations, love all men. Elizabeth Barrett Browning has expressed her idea of true patriotism in a way quite Tolstoyan: "I confess that I dream of the day when an English statesman shall arise with a heart too large for England, having courage in the face of his countrymen to assert of some suggested policy: 'This is good for your trade; this is necessary for your domination; but it will vex a people hard by; it will hurt a people farther off; it will profit nothing to the general humanity; therefore away with it! It is not for you nor for me.' When a British minister dares speak so, and when a British public applauds him speaking, then shall the nation be glorious, and her praise, instead of exploding from within, from loud civic mouths, will come to her from without, as all worthy praise must."

But even more boldly Tolstoy writes: "I know now that my unity with others cannot be shut off by a frontier, or by a governmental decree which decides that I belong to this or that nation. I know now that all men are everywhere brothers and equals. When I think now of all the evil that I have done, that I have endured, and that I have seen about me, as the consequence of national enmities, I see clearly that it is all due to that gross imposture called patriotism and love for one's native land. . . . I understand now that true welfare is possible only on condition that I recognize my unity with the whole world. I believe this, and this belief has changed my estimate of what is right and wrong, important and despicable. What once seemed to me right and important—love for my country, love for my own nation, for my empire, services rendered at the expense of other men, military exploits—now seem to me repulsive and pitiable. What once seemed to me shameful and wrong—renunciation

of nationality and the cultivation of cosmopolitanism—now seem to me right and important.” And after the Russo-Japanese war, Tolstoy wrote a letter to a Japanese in which he signed himself: “In spite of all external differences,—your loving brother, Lyof Tolstoy.”

The fifth commandment, which I have reserved for the last, is to Tolstoy the most fundamental of all, and is the keystone of Christ’s moral edifice. In his “Confession” the sudden realization of the importance of this command is compared to the finding of the central, important fragment of a broken statue about which all the other fragments can be assembled, each fitting into its proper place and all forming a unity. Thus the understanding of the fifth commandment becomes for Tolstoy the key with which he unlocks the ethics of Jesus and finds it to be a consistent, divine message of love to mankind:

“Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: but I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.” “Do not use force,” Tolstoy understands Jesus to say. Obviously no one will object to this commandment in so far as it involves using force wickedly; but what if one seeks to do good,—save a poor child from the attack of a drunken brute, or punish a criminal? Is the use of force even then to be condemned? Yes, Tolstoy maintains; that is exactly what Jesus means to say. What are his ideals? Love your neighbor as yourself; let your light shine before men. But if you have used force in compelling a bad man to desist from doing evil, have you made him less wicked? His own heart may be doubly full of hatred for you and for all men because of your use of force. Nor have you made yourself more Christlike when, in using violence, you have only allowed force and anger to

supplant love in your heart. What have you accomplished, then, by your use of force, if it has made the wicked man no better, and has made you worse? You have made the evil-doer externally safer, but can you be satisfied with this? Have you not insulted God's image in your fellow-man when, professing to save his soul, you have begun by endeavoring to make him harmless, thus treating him as a beast? But, you say, when I have once made him safe, then I can with security try to save his soul. This is mockery, Tolstoy says. An evil is an evil. You cannot get love out of hate; and where love is, there God is also. By force you can cow an evil-doer into submission, but you can get him freely to leave his evil ways and to follow God only by love. Do not under any conditions resort to violence; resist not evil. Only love can beget love. And, however we may extol justice, our law-courts and prisons and police systems do not have love as their basis: they are compounded of hatred, which is sometimes called righteous indignation; of the spirit of revenge, which is styled justice; and of the selfish desire of security for ourselves, which is collectively magnified into the virtue of public safety. But Tolstoy declares, as Dostoyevsky had declared before him, and as Jesus above all declared: "If any man would go to law with thee, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also."

It would be easy for us to take this doctrine of non-resistance to pieces, to show that a literal observance of it would undo the work of our entire civilization; that in a world in which knaves and idiots abound the use of force is indispensable; that by stretching the meaning of some Gospel passages we can show that even Jesus believed in the use of force. All this would be contemptibly easy, but it would only illustrate the truth that the letter killeth. Christ is not to be refuted by being proved impracticable; for it is

precisely against the worship of the brutally practicable that Christ revolted. Certainly this modern egoistic world is practicable; certainly it is practicable to imprison and to exile to Siberia gangs of men whom we haven't reformed or who haven't reformed us. Certainly it is practicable to employ the very best years of a nation's manhood in training men to kill other men similarly trained. Certainly it is practicable to make ninety-nine persons in a hundred labor in order that the remaining one may be kept in luxurious idleness. There is nothing impracticable in assuring the innocence and safety of our own sisters and daughters and at the same time providing ready means for gratifying our passion by licensing the prostitution of the daughters and sisters of the poor, who do not count. All these things are eminently practicable; but they are not on that account the less wicked. On the other hand, Socrates was decidedly impracticable when he preferred drinking poison to renouncing his convictions. And Jesus,—what was there practicable about his allowing himself to be crucified and thus have his doubtless promising career cut short at the early age of thirty-three? Perhaps he should have adapted himself to the actual world in which he lived, fought the world with its own weapons, just as most of us would have done, and have become high rabbi of some synagogue or some weighty Roman dignitary, instead of remaining merely the Saviour of Mankind.

“We may declare that the universal practice of such a rule is very difficult; we may deny that he who follows it will find happiness; we may say with the unbelievers that it is stupid, that Christ was a dreamer, an idealist who propounded impracticable maxims which his disciples followed out of sheer stupidity: but it is impossible not to admit that Christ expressed in a manner at once clear and precise what he wished

to say; that is, that according to his doctrine a man must not resist evil, and consequently that whoever adopts this doctrine cannot resist evil. And yet neither believers nor unbelievers will admit this simple and clear interpretation of Christ's words."

Tolstoy likewise is not an efficiency expert: he is a prophet of ideals, and an ideal is not to be estimated necessarily in terms of its expediency. Man's performance is always found to fall short of his ideals; and if at least in our ideals we cannot rise in aspiration above our sordid performance, then we are still children of darkness. Tolstoy's gospel, like that of Christ, is a revolt against the merely expedient; and whether we follow him or not, we must at least understand what the good man is about. This worship of expediency Christ came to upset and to put in its place the worship of God, who is not the ideal of efficiency but of holiness, who does not prudently remain with His ninety-nine sheep that are safe in the fold, but goes to hunt for the one lost sheep.

The practical, expedient philosophy of life, on the other hand, is in the eyes of Tolstoy responsible for our nasty world. This is why a few men and women die of idle banqueting, and a good many more of starvation. Tolstoy's "slumming" experiences in Moscow abundantly proved to him the impossibility of saving men from squalor and degradation merely by giving them money. Not all who are in the gutter find life there intolerable: therein is the first problem; and the second is that those who do find gutter life and slum life wretched are experiencing a misery which is within themselves, "a misery not to be mended by any kind of bank-note." Condescending alms-giving cannot cure the ills of poverty, for it cannot save as many men from poverty as are daily made poor by the luxury of the rich, which luxury not

only impoverishes the masses, but also corrupts them, rousing in their souls greed and envy and distorted notions and dreams of happiness.

If poverty is not to be cured with bank-notes, even less does moral degradation yield to this superficial treatment. Here is a corrupt woman about to sell her thirteen-year-old daughter into a life of shame. Can this girl be saved from her fate by the police, or by kind, charitable society ladies? Tolstoy answers: "It was possible to take this girl away from her mother by force; but to convince that mother that she was doing wrong in selling her daughter was not possible. It would first be necessary to save this woman—this mother—from a condition of life approved by every one, and according to which a woman may live without marrying and without working, serving exclusively as a gratification to the passions. If I had thought about this, I should have understood that the majority of those ladies whom I wished to send here for the saving of this girl were not only themselves avoiding family duties and leading idle and sensual lives, but were consciously educating their daughters for this very same mode of existence. One mother leads her daughter to the inn, and another to the court and to balls. But the views of the world held by both mothers are the same; to wit, that a woman must gratify the lusts of men, and for that she must be fed, dressed, and taken care of. How, then, are our ladies to reform this woman and her daughter?"

These are hard words,—words which make one shrink with dismay; but is there more of error than of truth in them? The pursuit of pleasure and sensual enjoyment and idle luxury are not repellent to us only because we are intoxicated with the wine of wealth and do not realize the horror and duplicity of our lives. Consider, you good people who go to balls and brilliant receptions, Tolstoy exclaims in one

of his books; bethink yourselves—what are you about? Here are a hundred women at a royal ball. “Each of these women wearing one-hundred-and-fifty-ruble dresses has doubtless lived in the country and seen peasants, and knows her nurse and her lady’s-maid who have poor fathers and brothers for whom to earn one hundred and fifty rubles to build a hut is the aim of a long and laborious life. She knows this; then how can she make merry, knowing that at that ball she carries on her bared body the hut which was the dream of her good maid’s brother? But granting that this may not have struck her—the fact that velvets, silks, sweets, flowers, laces, and dresses do not grow of themselves, but are made by people, is one which it would seem she could not but know. One would think she must know what kind of people make these things and under what conditions they make them, and why.”

But what is to be done? For this is the very title of the book from which I am quoting,—“What Is To Be Done?” Stop thinking of yourselves, Tolstoy says, stop thinking all the time of your needs, your desires, your pleasures, your so-called cultural demands, and think of your fellow-men! Still, you persist, what am I—I personally—to do? “People will go on buying and hiring, whether I do or not, and will buy and compel others to make velvets and sweets and cigarettes; and will go on hiring people to wash shirts even if I don’t. Then why deprive myself of velvets and sweets and cigarettes and clean shirts, since things are so arranged? . . . What difference will it make if I wear my shirts a week and make my cigarettes myself or give up smoking? This difference: that some washerwoman or cigarette-maker will strain her strength less, and the money I should have paid for the washing and cigarette-making I can give to that washerwoman or even to quite other washerwomen and

workers who are weary of work, and who, instead of working beyond their strength, may then rest and get tea."

"But I hear in reply (so reluctant are the rich, luxurious people to understand their position) : Even if I did agree to wear a dirty shirt and not to smoke, but to give the money to the poor instead, it would still not save the poor from being bled of all they possess, and my drop in the ocean will not help matters. . . . If I went among savages," Tolstoy answers, "and they treated me to tasty cutlets, and the next day I learned, perhaps saw, that these tasty cutlets were made of prisoners who had been chopped up to make them; then, if I considered it bad to eat people, however tasty the cutlets might be, and however general among those with whom I am living might be the custom of eating men, and however little the prisoners kept to serve as food might gain by my refusing a cutlet, still I should not and could not eat any more of them."

The Chinese say: If there is one man idle, there is another dying of hunger. This problem is quite simple and is made complicated only by those who do not wish to solve it. We can invent more and more efficient wage-systems, and more practicable methods of organized charity; we can keep a hundred poor people employed serving rich wines and viands on our table, and then allow one or two of them to feed on the crumbs, and count ourselves philanthropic. All this is hollow mockery. "If a horseman sees that his horse is tired out, he must not remain seated on its back and hold up its head, but simply get off." Feed the horse, to be sure, Tolstoy says, but first of all get off the horse's back! Make sure, above all, that in your own personal life you are not enslaving the life of some other man. Hurt no one, but, so far as lies in your power, help! Make other men work for

you as little as possible, and work as much as possible for yourself.

The realization of this truth of life Tolstoy compares to the experience of a man who, having started on a certain errand, finds out that it is useless and turns back home. "What was at first on his right hand is now on his left, and what was on his left hand is on his right." Heretofore he had thought only of himself, of his family, his class, his nation; now he will think of others, other men's families, the other classes of society, the other nations. Life will no longer be for him a bill of fare, but a call to service. No longer will he ask himself, How much can I get out of men? but, How much can I give to them? True charity, of course, is to be the goal; but before I can willingly help any one I must first of all be sure that I am not forcing some one else to serve me unwillingly. "It is true that all our interests are interwoven, but each man's conscience tells him without much reckoning to whose credit goes the work, and to whose the idleness. And not conscience alone tells one this: it is most clearly told by one's cash-book. The more money a man spends, the more work he obliges others to do for him; and the less he spends, the more he works."

The conclusion of Tolstoy's reasoning is clear. Men suffer and are depraved because some men are in bondage to others. Therefore, until this initial cause of misery is removed, all other remedies are futile. "If I wish to help the poor—that is, to make the poor cease to be poor—I ought not to create those same poor." "I go to help the poor. But of the two who is the poorer? No one is poorer than myself. I am a weak, good-for-nothing parasite, who can exist only under very peculiar conditions, who can live only when thousands of people labor to support this life which is not

useful to any one. And I, this very caterpillar which eats up the leaves of the tree, wish to help the growth and the health of the tree and to cure it."

This is the simple truth of the matter, according to Tolstoy, much as men try to evade it by vain philosophizing. Malthus would explain the misery of the poor in terms of some unchangeable laws for which no one is to blame, unless it be the starving working-people themselves. "Why do these fools come into the world when they know they will not have enough to eat?" Comte would describe humanity as an organism of which some people are presumably the lofty head and dainty palate, and others inevitably the weary, blistered feet, trudging along, supporting the whole. Hegelianism owes its initial success, Tolstoy believes, not so much to the harmonious perfection of its system as to this: that its explanation of the world and our life allowed men the opportunity of saying, "All is reasonable, all is good; nobody is to blame for anything." The advocates of "the division of labor" write as if, in uttering the charmed phrase, they have exhausted and solved the knotty problem of life, as if the further question did not yet remain, "Whether the now existing division of labor in human society is that division which ought to be."

Those who choose "mental and spiritual labor" demand as their due that, before yielding intellectual fruit, they be given, as it were on credit, the fruits of the physical labor of others. But what if every workman should say: "Before I go to work to prepare bodily food for you, I want the fruits of the spirit. In order to have strength for laboring, I require a religious teaching, the social order of common life, application of knowledge to labor, and the joys and comforts which art gives. I have no time to work out for myself a teaching concerning the meaning of life,—give it to me!"

Is the division of labor genuine? Does the scientist, the novelist, the poet, the musician, the artist serve directly the spiritual needs of the workers who directly satisfy his physical needs? When a scientist makes a catalogue of a million beetles, when an artist paints opulence, when a poet indulges his sophisticated fancy, and all consume the product of the peasants' work, is there a real, actual exchange of labor in the process? To say nothing of the purity—*i.e.*, uselessness—of science which so frequently is its boast,—“tell a painter to draw penny pictures, tell a musician to teach country-women to sing songs, tell a poet to throw aside his poems and novels and satires, and to compose song-books for the people and stories and tales which might be intelligible to ignorant persons,—they will say you are cracked.”

The view and the estimate of art which Tolstoy holds in his essay “What is Art?” is a direct corollary of the above. Great art is measured by its capacity to communicate itself to universal humanity: not to some sophisticated coterie, not to some one class of people, but to man and woman in their simplicity and humility of soul. “Art is not a pleasure, a solace, or an amusement; art is a great matter. Art is an organ of human life, transmitting man's reasonable perception into feeling.” And a work of art which refuses to perform this chief function for a part—and that the greater part—of the human race, is bad art, even though it may enjoy the highest praises of those who, in appreciating it, aristocratically isolate themselves from the crude, unlettered millions.

Tolstoy applies his criterion mercilessly. That a Baudelaire, a Verlaine, an Ibsen, a Maeterlinck, a Burne-Jones, a Boecklin, a Richard Strauss are to be ruled out; that subtle notions, sophisticated, supersensitive, or distorted feelings, beauty-hunting, pleasure-sated prodigality athirst for new

sensations, and discontented, introspective idleness,—that these would be rejected by Tolstoy is a foregone conclusion. But Shakespeare suffers, and "Don Quixote," and the later work of Beethoven, and especially Wagner, and most of the painters accounted great. On the other hand, the great Bibles of the world endure the test, and Schiller's "Robbers," and "Les Misérables," and "The Christmas Carol," and "Adam Bede," and "Uncle Tom's Cabin," and Dostoyevsky; but, of Tolstoy's own work, discarding "War and Peace" and "Anna Karenin," barely two short stories are saved: "God Sees the Truth" ("The Long Exile"), as belonging to religious art, "transmitting feelings of love to God and one's neighbor," and "The Prisoner of the Caucasus," as an example of universal art, "transmitting the very simplest feelings common to all men." Thus, for Tolstoy, "the destiny of art in our time is to transmit from the realm of reason to the realm of feeling the truth that well-being for men consists in being united together, and to set up, in place of the existing reign of force, that kingdom of God—*i.e.*, of love—which we all recognize to be the highest aim of human life."

Tolstoy asks himself, How can I, Lyof Tolstoy, save others from being my servitors? I can take care of my own room; I can clean my boots—indeed, I can make my own boots; I can go into the fields and by honest labor produce the equivalent of the food which I consume. And only *after* I have done this shall I have a right to offer my help to my fellow-men without feeling like a robber who returns part of the booty. And the work which I do must be of a sort which will relieve some of the common people from doing that work for me, for I cannot save my fellow-man who produces and makes my bread by philosophizing in his place. Nor do I, in so doing, reject in any way the true dignity of

mental work. The maximum time I can spend in really profitable mental work is five hours. I sleep eight hours. What do I do with the remaining eleven hours? Let me, during that time, relieve the peasant in his manual labor; let me allow him a chance to think at least half an hour.

Still, what was Tolstoy to do with his property, with his thousands of *desyatins* of land, with his copyrights? Was he justified in simply giving away all his estate to the poor? That would have compelled his wife and family to abandon their rich life and follow him, contrary to their convictions, perhaps,—and compulsion is wrong, according to Tolstoy. Besides, his wife had helped increase his wealth: he could not give away her and her children's share. He himself, on the other hand, could no longer hold to his wealth and remain honest with himself. Tolstoy accordingly gave up all rights to his estate, handed it over to his wife to manage as she saw fit. In his own house he remained a guest; each day he devoted several hours to manual labor, earning his bread directly. He continued to write, but declared all his works free of copyright, free for any one to publish and circulate among men. Only when the Dukhobors faced punishment and exile because they regarded military service as contrary to the Christian religion and refused to enter the army, Tolstoy used his novel "Resurrection" to raise funds with which to enable them to emigrate to Canada, where freedom was promised them.

So we find Tolstoy writing "Popular Legends," simple stories of charity and forgiveness, and also criticisms of life, candid, penetrating, pitilessly sincere. In "Neglect a Fire and it Spreads," anger and hatred and rancor lead to the mutual destruction of two peasants' households. The shoemaker Martuin Avdyetch, in "Where Love is, There God is Also," hears in his dreams the promise of Christ to visit

him, and his day of expectation is a Tolstoyan illustration of the verse, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." "Master and Man" is a larger canvas: a landed proprietor of utterly selfish character is caught in a snowstorm, and attempts to save his own life by escaping on horseback, leaving his coachman to freeze to death. After long wandering, the animal brings him back to the carriage he has abandoned. He finds his coachman almost frozen. Moved by a sudden outburst of humanity, he prostrates himself over the freezing figure and thaws it back to life with the warmth of his own body. When the rescuing party finds him, he has frozen to death, but the coachman is saved.

It would be wrong to think that these are mere tracts: some of the later stories of Tolstoy are veritable literary gems. The finale of the short classic "God Sees the Truth," in which Aksenov's spirit of forgiveness conquers the criminal Makar, causing him to confess his misdeeds, exculpate Aksenov and secure his release, is a bit of genuine pathos: "When the order came to let Aksenov go home, he was dead." The spirit of the Bible is in these stories, and there is Biblical simplicity in the narratives, and a Biblical verisimilitude. Avdyetch the shoemaker, waiting for Christ, watches the passing crowd. "Two soldiers passed by; one wore boots furnished by the crown, and the other one boots that he had made. Then the master of the next house passed by in shining goloshes . . ." and so forth, all from a veritable cobbler's viewpoint, requiring no commentary, and itself being the very essence of realism.

But there is criticism also, acute criticism, and very thinly disguised. The portrait in "A Candle," of the overseer who oppresses the peasants and compels them to break God's law by plowing on Easter Sunday, is a bold parable.

If rebel violence is not commended by Tolstoy, little doubt is left as to the identity of the overseer, and ominous is the description of the punishment which God inflicts on Michail Semyonovitch. Regicide is condemned, but tyranny is even more clearly denounced. The pithy "Skazka" requires no foot-notes. Ivan the Fool does all the work, his two brothers scorn him for his crude manners, but live and prosper at his expense. A time comes when Ivan is made Czar, and instead of laws and regulations, one simple rule suffices in his czardom: "Whoever has callous hands, comes to the table; whoever has not, gets what is left." One wonders how the censor, who mutilated "What is Art?" and forbade the publication of Tolstoy's religious writings, allowed this menacing prophecy to appear in its entirety. Perhaps we have here another illustration of the point mentioned in our first lecture: even bold fiction passes in Russia where serious exposition is forbidden; for—who knows?—perhaps the mass of readers would miss the point, perhaps the censor himself missed it. Meanwhile, literature, the novel, still remains Russia's chief channel of spiritual self-analysis.

The consciousness of death is clearly present in Tolstoy's later stories. He pictures it from various angles, and each portrayal of death is a criticism of life. Ivan Ilyitch dies as he has lived. A meaningless conclusion of an empty life, his death is merely an incident in the *tchinovnik* sphere of selfish ambition in which he has moved. Just as he had advanced in rank over the corpses of his older colleagues, so the younger men in his office anticipate the moving-up process after his own routine alphabet of life has reached its futile omega. In "Three Deaths," an aristocratic lady, an old peasant, and a tree complete the same cycle of existence and pass into the unknown.

What unknown? About the question of immortality,

Tolstoy's view passes from negatively inclined skepticism to reverent agnosticism, which tends toward the end to reach a level of devoted hopefulness. "It is impossible to receive faith from any one; it is impossible to convince oneself of immortality. In order to have faith in immortality it is necessary that the latter should exist; and in order that the latter should exist it is necessary to understand one's life in that in which it is immortal. Only he can believe in a future life who has performed his work of life, who has established in that life that new relation to the world which does not as yet find a place in the world."

Bravely Tolstoy championed his gospel of love of others, and opposed all use of force and all egoism. Thousands of men read his works, were converted to his view of life, and tried to follow him in the path of God. Holy Russia excommunicated him, the government of the Czar punished, imprisoned, exiled his followers, but dared not—literally dared not—touch this man of God, as witness his letters to the Russian Ministers of Justice and of the Interior. Still he did not feel satisfied with himself. Still he thought that he was not living as unselfishly as he ought. In the year 1897 he wrote the following letter to his wife and put it among his papers, asking that it be delivered to her after his death:

"MY DEAR SONYA:

"I have long been tormented by the incongruity between my life and my beliefs. To make you change your way of life, your habits, which I taught you myself, was impossible; to leave you has so far also been impossible, for I thought that I should be depriving the children, while they were still young, of the influence, however small, which I might have over them, and should be causing you pain. But to continue

to live as I have been living these sixteen years, at one time struggling and harassing you, at another yielding to those influences and temptations to which I was accustomed and by which I was surrounded, has also become impossible for me at last; and I have made up my mind to do what I have long wished to do,—to go away; . . . for I, who am now entering on my seventieth year, long, with all the strength of my spirit, for that tranquillity and solitude and, though not perfect accord, still something better than this crying discord between my life and my beliefs and conscience.”

Thirteen years more elapsed before Tolstoy actually fled from his house to seek peace with God. It is not our province here to recite the immediate strain and trouble which determined Tolstoy's flight, nor the tragic conditions which made his death, not one of peaceful solitude, as he desired it to be, but the most abominably published and moving-pictured event in the world. Nor is it for us to criticize as mistaken this last act of self-abnegation on the part of a man who had spent thirty years seeking to do, not his own will, but the will of God.

Was he right? Was he wrong? That no one man can decide. Tolstoy's gospel is not beyond criticism, but perhaps the Gospel of Jesus itself is not beyond criticism. Tolstoy preached, and tried to practise, the religion of consistent love of men; he tried to stop making his fellow-men his slaves, and to make himself their fellow-worker. Some of those who call themselves followers of Tolstoy have acted as if the outward expressions of his ideal of life, which suited his case, exhausted his gospel; as if the sage of Yasnaya Polyana merely taught men to wear grimy blouses, chop wood, plow the fields, and avoid the use of money. The story is told of an Englishman who became a Tol-

stoyan and would not touch money, but asked his wife to sign his checks for him, and had a secretary going about buying the things he wanted and paying for his railway tickets. And there are many more who fail to understand Tolstoy's gospel because they cannot get past their objections to his own perhaps eccentric methods of preaching that gospel. "I shall soon be dead," he sadly predicted, "and people will say that Tolstoy taught men to plow and reap and make boots; while the chief thing that I have been trying so hard to say all my life, the thing I believe in, the most important of all, they will forget." And this most important thing is the truth that selfishness which exploits others is the source of evil, and that self-sacrificing love for others is the highest good. Tolstoy advocated the denial of the powers of darkness within us: anger, lust, desire to oppress, exploitation—in a word, egoism.

This ideal of life may not be practicable, it may not be expedient, it may not be even scientific, as some people say that Nietzsche's ideal of proud self-assertion is scientific, but Tolstoy believed that it was the ideal which Jesus advocated. And upon those who call themselves Christians the necessity is imposed of determining whether Tolstoy was as intimate an acquaintance of Jesus as are those others of his professed servants who do not find it inconsistent with His gospel to sanctify the marriage of the same dissolute man to several different women, one after another, provided only that they believe that Jesus of Nazareth was conceived immaculately; who are quite able so to twist the meaning of the Book of Life that poor men and bad men and men of other races and nationalities will be kept "where they belong," provided only that they themselves continue to believe in the literal, divine inspiration of the Bible; who are able in a thousand churches and cathedrals to pray to the God of Love and

Peace to help their armies kill the armies of their enemies, so long as they assert the dogma that God is Three-in-One and created the world out of nothing.

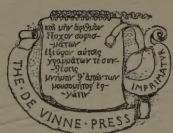
The average man is much bolder and much more resolute in his beliefs than in his daily conduct. Most men seem quite ready to include any number of doctrines in the creed which is to obtain for them eternal happiness, if only they are allowed to retain hold of their purse-strings, if only their course of life is not interfered with. But Tolstoy heard Jesus say to him: It is not enough that you have read the law and the prophets: give all you have to the poor and follow me. He found that the religion of Jesus as well as all other great religions are religions of life, not theologies. He tried to rid his soul of anger, lust, violence, and selfishness, and to love and help his fellow-men. And the Russian Orthodox Church declared him an enemy of God because he did not believe in miracles, because he rejected the dogmas of the Trinity and the Divine Birth, and could not be dogmatic about the immortality of the soul.

Who can judge his life? The upholders of orthodoxy? But in "Three Hermits" the bishop who tries to teach the simple, untutored eremites how to pray to God in the approved manner finds that the Lord's Prayer overtaxes their memory and does not inspire religious devotion. And he is wise and pious enough to grant them the privilege of praying to God in their own simple way: "*Troe vas, troe nas, pomiluy nas!*" ("You three have mercy on us three!") This is a hint to the upholders of orthodoxy. The story "The Two Old Men" impresses me as a Tolstoyan "Apologia pro Vita Sua," brief, simple, addressed to us all. Two peasants, Yefim and Yelisei, set out on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. But Yelisei is diverted from his holy journey by the call of mercy and, having spent on a poor family all the

money which he had saved for his pilgrimage expenses, finds himself obliged to return home. Yefim proceeds on his way, suspicious of strangers and coldly calculating from beginning to end. But when he finally stands in orthodox devotion before the Holy Sepulcher, behold! Yelisei has reached there before him. It is Yefim's vision, of course, and it is Tolstoy's parable, but the message of both is unmistakable.

And it is Tolstoy's message to the world: "God bids every one do his duty till death—in love and good deeds."

RADOSLAV ANDREA TSANOFF.



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